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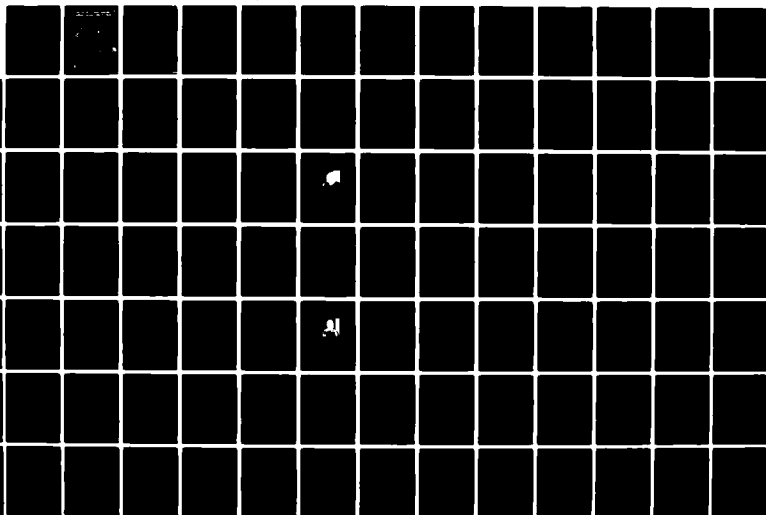
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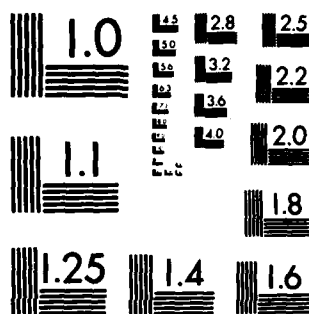
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TOMBIGBEE HISTORIC TOWNSITES PROJECT
AD A127393

Volume 5
(Interview Numbers 123-128)



Compiled by:
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and
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with an Introduction by
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THTP - Oral History Interview OH 123
An interview with
Robert L. Adair

conducted and edited by
Betty E. Mitson

Robert Adair was born in Vernon, Alabama on February 11, 1908 and moved to Clay County, Mississippi in 1930. He made his living by cutting timber along the Tombigbee River, including the land on which Vinton, Barton, and Colbert are located. He describes lumbering operations and the kinds of timber that were taken from the river bottoms. During his work along the river, Mr. Adair became familiar with some of the landmarks, including house sites associated with Barton and Colbert. These are discussed in the interview.

The interview with Mr. Adair was recorded in his home by Betty Mitson on February 19, 1980. Also present was Mrs. Vivan Logan Adair.

M: This is an interview with Robert L. Adair for the Tombigbee Historic Townsites Project by Betty E. Mitson. Mr. Adair's address is Route 2, Box 251, West Point, Mississippi 39773 and his telephone number is 494-3199. The interview is taking place in his home at Stephens Switch. The date is February 19, 1980.

Mr. Adair, would you tell me where and when you were born?

A: I was born at Vernon in Lamar County, Alabama, on February 11, 1908.

M: What year did you move here to the West Point area?

A: 1930.

M: Were you raised in Alabama?

A: Yes, in Alabama and in Lowndes County, Mississippi.

M: Oh, you lived in Lowndes County?

A: Yes, for several years. I lived in Alabama until I was about ten years old.

M: Where did you go from Alabama?

A: I went to Tennessee.

M: How long were you in Tennessee?

A: Well, I think we went there in 1919, and we moved away from there in about 1923, I think. We moved to Columbus in Lowndes County, Mississippi.

M: What brought you to Clay County?

A: Well, I was just hunting labor. That was in the Depression days. We were hunting labor and moved down to the Waverly Ferry. My father ran the ferry.

M: You were a grown man then, weren't you?

A: Oh, sure, I was nearly twenty-five.

M: Did you live at Stephens Switch at that time?

A: No, ma'am, we lived at Waverly for five years, I believe.

M: Were you married then?

A: Yes, ma'am. We married in 1933 at Waverly. We lived in a little house down on the side of the railroad, by the switch, for five years. Then we moved to Stephens Switch.

M: Did your father run the ferry at Waverly for some time?

A: Sixteen years.

M: Would you describe that ferry?

A: It was just a big floating bridge. Of course, they had the roads fixed down to the bank, and concreted.

M: The roads were concreted?

A: Yes, ma'am, right on the riverbank. When you pulled it up, it had what they called "aprons" on it, with cables that raised up and down. When you pulled it up to the bank, it slid up on those concrete slabs and then you had a chain to fasten the ferry until you drove onto it.

M: Were they able to take automobiles onto it?

A: Sure.

M: How many at one time?

A: I believe, usually two, I think I have seen them take three.

M: Did you ever see anybody go off the side?

A: No. I never did see that, but my brother was running it when a couple drove off the end of it.

M: How did they get them out?

A: They got out themselves. See, they kept a little boat tied onto the side of that ferry for safety. My brother got it loose right quick and paddled out there, and they popped up just like a fish cork. He got them and put them into the boat.

M: I suppose that you also saw the Barton Ferry when it was in operation.

A: Oh, sure.

M: Would you compare the two ferries? What were the differences in them?

A: Well, there was really more traffic on the Waverly Ferry than on any other ferry on the Tombigbee River, I would say. The Barton Ferry wasn't used too much, really.

M: Would you say that Barton Ferry was used mainly, at that time, to go across the river to camp?

A: Well, it was just like all roads. Some roads have more traffic than others do. You see, Waverly Ferry was on the old direct Highway 50, between Columbus and West Point. Anybody going from one town to the other didn't go by way of Barton Ferry. It was much nearer to come by way of Waverly.

M: Was there a bridge at that time?

A: No.

M: Do you know when the bridge to Columbus was built?

A: Well, they had a bridge just west of Columbus. You could come plumb around by Mayhew, back in the west. That was on the main big highway.

M: Is that the bridge that later went down?

A: No, ma'am. No, the bridge that got knocked into the river hadn't been built but fifteen years.

M: Oh, so when that bridge was built, it took the place of the Waverly ferry?

A: That's right; that was Highway 50. It was built about fifteen years back.

M: Do you think they could get two cars onto the Barton ferry?

A: Oh, yes, ma'am. It was about as big as the Nashville ferry. There was another ferry just below Columbus which was the Nashville ferry. All three ferries were about the same size.

M: Did your father continue to run the Waverly ferry until he retired?

A: Yes, ma'am.

M: What kind of work did you do as a young man, when you first came here?

A: I worked in timber and farmed a little. Almost everybody would farm through the summertime, and in the late summer and fall they would start to work in the timber. I worked in timber all over in Lowndes County. We'd haul it to Columbus. I went to hauling logs when I was fourteen years old.

M: Did you work for a small milling operation?

A: Yes, ma'am. At that time, the big mills were in town. When you were close enough to town, you could buy timber anywhere then. We would buy timber, cut it, load it on a wagon, and haul it to town. We could haul it in a seven, eight, or ten mile radius around town.

M: How would you market that?

A: Just haul it down and sell it to the big mills. They sawed it up, manufactured it, sawed it into lumber.

M: You were hauling the whole log?

A: The whole log. It was cut into ten, twelve and sixteen-foot logs,

just like lumber was. We would haul the cut logs, and they would saw them into planks and ship it wherever they wanted it shipped to.

M: Was that the normal operation for a small operator at that time?

A: Well, at that time I was not in the mill. I didn't have the mill; I was just hauling logs to the big mill. Later on, when we came to Waverly, we started loading them on the boxcars and shipping the logs.

M: From Waverly, where did they go?

A: They'd go to Columbus and were cut up into lumber there. Then as the timber business grew and they got to needing more lumber, then they bought those little mills. We'd get us a little mill. When we first started, Seitz Lumber Company at West Point gave us a mill. We started sawing for them.

M: When you say "we," who do you mean?

A: Me and my brother and everybody that worked at the mill. Sometimes there would be fifteen or twenty.

M: Would Seitz finance you to buy that equipment?

A: Yes, ma'am. They loaned us the money to buy the timber wherever we could find it.

M: But how did you finance the equipment?

A: They lent us the money.

M: Was this equipment that you could move from place to place?

A: That's right.

M: Would you do that on a big wagon?

A: That's right, and on trucks. One sawmill might have one good truck to haul its lumber on, or maybe two trucks. Like every other business, they grew up when they could. We would set up those mills in the woods and manufacture, saw, this lumber there. Then we didn't have to haul anything to town but the lumber. See, we threw away all the waste.

M: What kinds of wood were you cutting?

A: I cut most every kind you can think of. We cut oak, gum of all kinds, pine, cedar, willow. We just cut the general run of hardwood timber and pine.

M: Would you make some comments about the different qualities of the wood that you dealt with, what might be easier to cut, what might be more difficult to haul, and that kind of thing?

A: Oh, sure. Well, the pine was the easiest and was the most economical to cut and haul. We called it southern yellow pine. Of course, we had to cut the oak, but the red oak--well, at that time we had white oak, too, but not too much of it--but the red oak and white oak made hardwood flooring. That was rather easily manufactured. Of course, it was heavier than the pine and you couldn't handle as much of it as the pine.

M: What was the most plentiful?

A: Oak and sweet gum. From sweet gum, they made furniture.

M: What about cedar?

A: Well, there's not much cedar in this country. They had a market for cedar. The lumber folks would sell it. In those days, cedar was used in rather expensive furniture. It seems like they were using cedar very much. They had made cedar chests and chiffoniers and so on, but that died. Moths don't go in cedar furniture, so people would line their clothes with it.

M: What wood brought you the best price?

A: The best price would be for the yellow pine.

M: Why?

A: Well, it was used more in building houses, and more of it was shipped to different countries. You see, these lumber mills, wherever they could get an order for a bunch of that yellow pine, I think they got pretty good money for it. That's today.

M: They exported it?

A: Yes.

M: And you got a better price for that than for oak?

A: Some. It didn't make much difference, but you got a better price for yellow pine.

M: What did you actually cut the most of?

A: Well, I cut oak, and gum, and hardwood the most when I was cutting, because there was the most of it. Of course, the next was pine.

M: Would there be certain areas where you'd get a certain kind of tree?

A: Sure.

M: For instance, in the sandy land would you get a certain kind of tree that would be different from what you would find in the prairie land?

A: Oh, sure. The prairie-land timber mostly grew short. It was a different species of white oak. They call it "post oak." It was classed

along with the white oak, except I don't think they ever used the post oak much in making whiskey-barrel staves. You see, most of this white oak went to . . . a lot of it, I think, left this country and went to Terre Haute, Indiana.

M: What was there?

A: That was a whiskey place, I guess, where they manufactured whiskey barrels. That's what the white oak was used for, mostly. But the old post oak was a short-type tree; it didn't grow very tall. It was hard like white oak, though, and was about the same species.

M: What kind would you get on the sandy land?

A: Well, you'd get a lot of pine on the sandy land. Pine grows better in the sandy land. Up in the prairie, you won't see any pine today. It never has grown there. Everything has its nature; it has a place to grow. It has adapted to certain conditions. I reckon that's the way God made the world. He put it like it's supposed to be. In this prairie with a lot of lime, pine don't grow. Those big timber companies that set out pine, they won't buy prairie land for that. They use clay or sand.

M: Was there cedar down in the sandy land?

A: Well, a lot of it grows in the prairie, too, but it's like the oak; it's short.

M: Oh, if it grows in the prairie land, it grows short?

A: It grows short there. It's the same tree in either place, but it grows better in the sandy land.

M: What about willow?

A: You find willow down in the swampy land. It grows close to water.

M: Would that be hard to get?

A: In this country you don't see much of it now. We had quite a bit of it when I was at Vicksburg, but you don't see none of it much up here.

M: Wouldn't it be hard to cut in the swamp?

A: Oh, sure, it would be hard to get out.

M: Would you get down in hip boots to get that?

A: In hip boots, and sometimes you had to get into the water to cut it.

M: How would you pull it out?

A: In the first logging days, they used oxen. They'd get right down in

the mud with oxen to pull it out. But nowadays, you see, they've got caterpillars and log skidders.

M: How did you get it out?

A: Well, when I first started, I have used oxen, but not much. Then we went from oxen, to mules, to horses, and from there to caterpillars and log skidders.

M: When you used oxen, was that before you came to Clay County?

A: Oh, yes, when I was a young man. There was a company called the Box Mill, and they kept a few oxen for such jobs as that. They would just lend you those oxen to take the timber out of the real bad places, where the horses and things couldn't go.

M: When you worked here in Clay County and Seitz Lumber Company furnished your financing and your equipment, did you always sell your lumber to them?

A: Yes, ma'am.

M: How would you get it to West Point?

A: On a truck.

M: Would they come and get it for you, or would you have to haul it?

A: I'd have to haul it. They paid me so much a thousand board feet when I delivered it.

M: Did they keep books or would they pay you regularly when you delivered?

A: They'd pay us mostly on Saturdays. If we wanted any money before then, they would pay us. But usually we would go in on the weekend and get our money.

M: Would you be delivering almost daily?

A: Sure, we delivered what we had cut everyday.

M: How long a day did you work?

A: Eight hours and ten. We called it eight and ten, but it would be mostly twelve. Of course, you know, the hired laborer didn't want to put in over eight or ten hours, but us, we who had to see after it, worked from daylight to dark and into the night.

M: You and your brother operated together. Did you have hired men most of the time, too?

A: That's right.

M: How many would you have to hire?

- A: Well, I don't remember just exactly how many then, but I remember that I had eighteen at one time.
- M: When you got to be that size of an operation, did you call yourself by a particular name? Did you say you were a certain lumber company?
- A: No, ma'am. I still just hauled to Seitz Lumber Company. See, I logged to them for a good while before they let me have the mill. I believe it was between thirty-five and forty years, from about 1935 to about four years ago.
- M: You logged down on the old sites of Barton and Colbert, didn't you?
- A: Yes, ma'am. I've logged off of where they claim the old town used to be. There is a camphouse sitting there now, the Simmons camphouse. That's just south of the ferry on the west side of the river.
- M: I want to talk about that in a minute. But first I want to ask you, if you got any specific kinds of trees, or if it was generally all these kinds of trees that we have been talking about?
- A: Well, there was more pine than there was the other, but it was in general, all just like the rest of it.
- M: When you first came into that area, was the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company already operating in the general vicinity?
- A: No, ma'am.
- M: Do you remember about what time Weyerhaeuser moved into that area of Mississippi?
- A: No, I sure don't.
- M: Was it after the Second World War?
- A: Yes, ma'am.
- M: So in the early period there was no massive logging off by any big lumbering company?
- A: No, ma'am. Such as the Weyerhaeuser and the Georgia Pacific? I didn't know they existed.
- M: Do you think it could have been the 1950s?
- A: I believe it was. The 1950s or 1960s. Well, it would go back a little further than the 1960s.
- VA: I don't think so, Robert. I don't think so.

M: Do you remember the area around there where they may have logged off?

A: No, ma'am, I don't, not the Weyerhaeuser Company.

M: What about Georgia Pacific?

A: Well, Georgia Pacific has never operated right in here. When I quit logging, we were logging in the same bottom down at Nashville Ferry. See, they plant their pine and grow it for their paper mill, and so does Weyerhaeuser; they grow their timber for paper and lumber, too.

M: Well, when Weyerhaeuser did move into Clay County, I'm not certain where they did their early work. But I do want to know about how they cleared the land and replanted. Back in those days, did you see their clearing? For instance, did they dig up the earth to replant?

A: No, ma'am. A lot of times they just went there and did what they called "girdling" those hardwood trees. If there was enough good timber, they would sell it off and let somebody manufacture it. But if it wasn't, they would just go there and poison it. They would cut a ring around that tree and put some kind of poison on it. It would just stand there and die, and they'd plant those little pines in among this dead timber. The first I ever knew of Weyerhaeuser coming to Clay County, I think that was probably up in the 1960s. It was up here on the Rose place. That's my first knowing of where they come to. They might have come somewhere else. A lot of that was prairie country. After they bought that land there--I believe it was twenty-six hundred acres--they decided that it wouldn't be good to grow pine on. There were worlds of big pine on it, so I don't know why but they decided that it wouldn't be good and they sold that particular place. They manufactured all the timber off of it, the pine and everything that they wanted and then sold the land.

I sawmilled there for two or three years and hauled it to Seitz Lumber Company. They sold the timber off of it, then sold the land. I don't know why they said it wouldn't grow pine. They got, you know, specialists claiming that they knew what they are doing. They said it wouldn't grow pine, but it did at one time.

M: I've been wondering if they dug up the soil when they did any of their replanting anywhere. Have you ever known them to do that?

A: No, ma'am. But where they do what they call clear-cutting, they do bulldoze that land. They clean it off to where they can run machinery to plant those pines with. That's where they have a lot of land, a big operation. But where they deaden this timber, they just went in there with men with some kind of little old spade and planted that stuff all in there, you see, to save bulldozing and so much expense on planting it. Where they got lots of land, they plant it by machinery.

M: You don't know which system they used in Vinton or Barton or Colbert, do you?

A: I believe they used the deadening; they did, they used the deadening.

M: The deadening technique?

A: The deadening technique.

M: So, that means, then, that the soil would not have been ripped up.

A: No.

M: What happened to those trees that were killed?

A: They fell down and rotted.

M: And the little pines that they put in, were put in while the older trees were still in the rotting stage?

A: Still in the rotting stage.

M: Do you know where that happened? In the Vinton area?

A: Well, where I was talking about, the little old town of Colbert where that camphouse was, right to the west they fixed it that way.

M: They did?

A: That's right.

M: Whose place is that camphouse that you spoke of?

A: Simmons. It was at that time.

M: Do you know if that is a very old building?

A: No, it was just recently put up there on the river for a camphouse. There was no sign of a town. Sometimes you'd run into some brick in the ground.

M: You mean from an earlier building?

A: I guess it was from the little old town of Colbert.

M: Do you mean they ran into it when they were building the camphouse?

A: No, I mean that if we were in the woods logging and cut deep ruts sometimes, I have saw a few brick there. It looked like where houses had been.

M: Would you be able to find those spots anymore?

A: No, ma'am, I wouldn't be able to.

M: Do you have any idea how much you actually logged around that area? Would you say, maybe, a year or two or a few months?

A: Well, I guess, a few months mostly, probably a year.

M: In what, about the middle of the 1930s?

A: All told, I guess . . . see, I logged the old Uithoven place. I went there at different times, and I logged at the Simmons place. That was where they said the little old town of Colbert was at one time. Then I went back a few years later and hauled the logs off the old Uithoven place.

M: How would you arrange that? Would you have a certain agreement with the Uithovens to log off their place?

A: Well, I didn't. Mr. Seitz and them bought the timber.

M: I see, so they would delegate you to do the cutting.

A: No, this was after I had quit sawmilling, when I worked there. I was logging, just logging wherever I could buy the timber.

M: By that time, you had your own equipment?

A: Yes, equipment.

M: Was old Dr. Uithoven still alive then?

A: No.

M: So, the lumber company was dealing with his children, I guess?

A: Yes.

M: What condition was the old Uithoven house in when you saw it?

A: It was in bad condition.

M: Nobody living in it?

A: Nobody living in it. You could come in at the doors or windows or wherever you wanted to.

M: Do you remember if there was any front stoop on it at that time?

A: I think there was, but it was in bad shape.

M: Do you remember what outbuildings were there?

A: One little old smokehouse, I'd say, was right back of the house, east. What I remember about it, was that it had worlds of those old-fashioned telephones in it. They had them just piled in there, you know. I guess a wagonload.

M: Oh, there were a lot of them?

- A: Yeah, a lot of them. I don't know where they got them, but they piled them in there, in the smokehouse back there. We called it the smokehouse.
- M: That's strange. Somebody had a collection, huh?
- A: They had a collection. (laughter)
- M: At that time, was there a place called Cal Phillip's?
- A: That's right.
- M: Was that in Barton?
- A: That was in Barton. He was running that business when I was at the Uithoven place, when I was up there.
- M: Was it a store?
- A: Yes, ma'am.
- M: Can you remember what the building looked like?
- A: Well, yeah, but I don't know whether I can describe it or not.
- M: Was it frame construction?
- A: Yes, ma'am.
- M: Do you have any idea how many rooms it had and what size they were? I don't expect you to be accurate, but some general idea?
- A: Well, I believe it had three rooms to the house, three or four. And they had built this store building onto it. They had the store and the house in the same building.
- M: Was it a log house?
- A: No, ma'am, it was a plank house.
- M: When you say "three rooms," would that be altogether?
- A: Well, yeah, altogether, and then they just built the store onto it. I believe it had two rooms.
- M: Was it bigger than the house itself?
- A: Yes, it added right smart to the house, and they sold gasoline, had a gas pump. It was just a general store, mostly.
- M: Was the house the old-fashioned style, with an open hall between rooms? Do you think it was what is called a dogtrot house?
- A: I don't believe it was. I don't know that it wasn't a log house. They could have planked over it. It could have been a log house.

M: Do you remember if the house had a porch across the front?

A: A small porch on the north side of it.

M: When you say the "north side," would that be, not across the front, but at the side?

A: It was mostly to the side. Seems like the house was built facing west and north, you know. It was built north and south, and the porch was on the north side of the house, next to the road, of course. The house was on the south side of the road.

M: Where was the store building in relationship to the road?

A: It was just the same like the house, except it was built on the west end of the house.

M: Do you have any idea what the dimensions would be?

A: I sure don't. You're talking about how large?

M: Yes.

A: No, I sure don't.

M: You don't know if the house is twenty feet across or thirty feet? Do you think it was a pretty big house?

A: Yeah, it was a pretty good-sized house. I'd say it would be thirty feet across there.

M: Across the front of the house?

A: Across the front of the house.

M: And then maybe the store another twenty feet to the side?

A: Something like twenty feet to the side.

M: Do you recall if the house was deeper than it was wide across?

A: No.

M: Were you ever inside the house?

A: Yes, ma'am, I've been inside, but just a time or two. I don't remember so long ago.

M: You don't remember how deep the store was, going back?

A: No, I don't

M: Were the house and store fairly close to the road?

A: I would say within two hundred feet, or less.

M: And you say this whole thing was burned down?

A: Yes, ma'am.

M: So what is left? The foundations?

A: The old chimney, I guess, and the foundation, brick pillars and things.

M: But you have an idea that you could find that spot if you needed to?

A: I believe I could.

M: If we had to have someone identify it for us, would you be willing to go out there, when it is nicer weather, and have a look around?

A: Yes, ma'am.

M: I appreciate that. It might not be necessary, but if so, it's good to know that you remember it. And that house earlier was called the Atkins house, wasn't it?

A: I believe that's right, the Atkins place.

M: You never knew the Atkins, did you?

A: Yes, I knew some of the children.

M: Did you?

A: I never knew their parents, but Mrs. Dawkins is one of the children.

M: Did the Atkins actually live in that house before Cal Phillips had it?

A: Well, now I wouldn't know that. I believe James Hendrix told me they did. They lived there one time.

M: If we wanted to talk to any of the Atkins children, would you be able to tell us how to get ahold of them?

A: Yes, ma'am.

M: If you know the children, could you tell me what their names are; do you recall offhand? Your wife said that one of the children is named Irene Dawkins, is that right? And she lives near the air base? Do you remember anyone else from the family who might be contacted? (to wife) You can go ahead and speak; that's alright.

VA: You know the boys better than I do.

A: I don't know; I know Irene Dawkins's boys, but they wouldn't know anything about it.

M: Do you have any idea about what age Irene might be.

A: She's older than I am.

VA: Seventy-five, I think.

M: So she would have quite a good memory, I expect.

A: She should.

M: Do you think she is the only one you can recall at the moment?

A: Yes, ma'am. That would be the only one I'd really know.

M: There were a couple of other questions that I wanted to ask you about wood. When you were lumbering, were those virgin stands of lumber?

A: Several of them were.

M: What kinds of wood would you get in virgin stands?

A: Pine, cypress, and well, I'd really say oak.

M: Was the wood you got down around the Barton, Colbert, and Vinton areas in virgin stands?

A: No, ma'am, they had been cut off.

M: Do you remember what areas you could find virgin timber in?

A: No, really and truly, I guess, none of it was virgin. We called it virgin because it had been so long since it had been cut that we didn't know anything about when it had been cut. But, I guess, that would be hard to find where it had never been cut.

M: So you're not sure that you ever cut original timber?

A: No, I'm not really sure that I ever cut virgin timber, except maybe a few trees around in it. Some of the trees would be so big that they would be left, you know, when they would go over before, and they would just keep on growing.

M: So, you really had some very big trees that you had to cut?

A: I had some very big trees.

M: Can you estimate the size of some of them?

A: Well, I've cut where one tree would have twenty-five hundred board feet.

M: About what would be the diameter near the base of a tree like that?

A: Well, up at the scale end of it, it would be four feet in diameter or a littler better.

M: When you say "scale end," what do you mean?

A: You scale the small end.

M: Oh, so that would be way up the tree?

A: Yeah. Well, it depends on how long the log was, a twelve or a sixteen foot length, or whatever you cut.

M: I see. So down at the other end it would be considerably bigger, wouldn't it?

A: Oh, sure.

M: Would you think maybe six or eight feet in diameter sometimes?

A: Well, I believe I've cut them over six feet.

M: That's a big tree to get out of the woods, isn't it?

A: That's a big tree.

M: Could mules move a tree like that?

A: No, ma'am, that's how come they were there. The mules and things couldn't get them out. So after they got the bulldozers and the skidders, when the timber got scarce, they quit leaving any of it. They'd get it all.

M: But you mean, then, earlier you would have to leave them when they were that big?

A: Oh, sure.

M: You'd leave the lower portion in the woods?

A: We'd leave the tree.

M: Oh, I see. So, when you didn't have that kind of equipment, you weren't cutting them either?

A: No.

M: Do you recall any floating of logs down the river?

A: No, ma'am, I don't, but it was done. In other words, I have found some old signs and some of the stuff they said was used in floating logs down the river.

M: That was before your time in that area?

A: Yes. Down at Vicksburg, when I was sawmilling down there, we cut some big cypress, got it out of the . . . It was already in an old raft they claimed had been in the Civil War. It had lodged in there.

M: You mean you pulled it out of the mud?

A: Pulled it up out of the mud. A man wanted boat lumber made out of it. We sawed it up, but it was put together with wooden pegs, and them holes would jump out when we got through sawing it. So it was no good.

M: You mean where the pegs had been?

A: Yes, ma'am.

M: It was that much pegged that you couldn't use it?

A: Not for boats. He wanted boats made out of it, and he couldn't use it.

M: And it had been used in the Civil War?

A: That's what they said. A little old raft had lodged in there, and they just went off and left it where it came through at Steel Bayou, out of Eagle Lake.

M: Did you ever pull any other old logs out of the mud?

A: Yeah, up here on the Banks place, the Corinth Lumber Company had cut a lot of logs in there, and their time had run out. They made them leave those logs. A log under the water will last for years and years, especially cypress. So we got quite a bit out of them lakes, those sloughs, that had been cut down and were still good.

M: Would you have to let them dry out good before you could cut them?

A: No.

M: No? You cut them while they were still damp?

A: Yeah, cut them while they were wet. Saw them up just when we could get them out.

M: If I was to say to you, "What is a logrolling?" what would you say?

A: A logrolling? Well, I remember when I was a very small child up in Alabama, they had a few of them. A logrolling is where they want to clear this land for farmers to grow food on. A bunch of men would just go in there, enough of them to get around those logs, pick them up and tote them. They'd cut them short enough so that they could tote them. And they'd tote them, pile them up, start a fire, and burn them. Then they started cutting the big timber. That's how a big portion of the timber left this country, in the logrolling, burning down where they had to have places to grow food. It would be burned up. They had to have a place to grow some food.

M: Would that often be a community venture?

- A: That's right. Several of them would get together. They would clear this man a field, and then this one a field. They would have to have quite a few men together to, you know, to tote those logs. I don't know, whether they knew that a mule could pull a log or not. (laughter) They didn't act like it. They'd tote them themselves, pile them up, and burn them.
- M: You never saw that yourself but you've heard about it, is that right?
- A: That's right, I remember my father going to them.
- M: So, you were just a youngster, but you know that your father was doing it.
- A: Yes.
- M: I see. Well, I really didn't ask you about where Cal Phillips came from. Maybe you'd want to tell me that?
- A: In 1930, when I came to Clay County, he lived about two miles above the ferry, in a place known as the Cook place.
- M: This is above Waverly ferry?
- A: Above Waverly ferry. Now it's the Campbell Gravel Company; it was. Of course, the government has taken it for the Tombigbee Waterway, now. But he lived there; he was selling timber several years before he purchased that place up at Barton's Ferry and started his store.
- M: Did you ever go into that store for supplies, when you were working out in the field? Did he furnish food supplies?
- A: Yeah, you could buy food and stuff in there, cigarettes and food.
- M: And would you use his gas station for some of your equipment?
- A: Occasionally, yes.
- M: I really didn't ask you about the equipment that you used for your lumbering operation. Was it large power equipment?
- A: Well, when we first started in the lumbering business, we just had horses and mules. Later on then we got caterpillars and log loaders.
- M: When would you have changed over?
- A: Well, it was several years later.
- M: Was it after the Second World War?
- A: Oh, yes, it was after the Second World War.
- M: Were you using the mules and horses all through the Depression period?

A: Yes, ma'am, and then plumb up to the Second World War. We started sawmilling just before World War II when they were having the registration for the drafts and so on.

M: Did the war affect your operation?

A: Well, it took some of the young men, but of course, it didn't really affect our operation because there was plenty of labor at that time. Everybody wanted to work.

M: I wondered if it also affected you insofar as what you needed to supply was concerned. Were you told that you needed to supply certain kinds of lumber for certain purposes, or did you just do as you had been doing?

A: Well, now Mr. Seitz of the Seitz Lumber Company saw after that. They would have those orders and things, and they would separate all of this stuff as we carried it into the lumbering company.

M: I suppose that the demand for lumber went up at that time, didn't it?

A: Continually.

M: I'd like to ask you a few more questions about wood because you seem to have some other kinds of wood around your house than we have talked about. You mentioned mulberry. Did you sometimes cut mulberry in the woods?

A: Yes.

M: Where would you find it?

A: Just in the woods like any other tree, but it was just a rare species, you see. Every once and awhile you'd find one.

M: Would that just be growing wild?

A: Nobody planted it.

M: Would you find that one on the sandy soil?

A: Mostly, yes. The cherry and the mulberry mostly grows in sandy soil--especially mulberry.

M: What are the qualities of those woods?

A: Well, it is a hard timber.

M: Both of them?

A: Yeah, both of them are hard when the lumber is dry. It is hard texture.

M: What about color?

A: Well, it's a beautiful color. They make furniture, just like we made that china cabinet.

M: Would they both turn red?

A: Yeah. Now, there's that old gun case right there behind you. It is mulberry.

M: Would they be red when you originally cut them?

A: Yes, ma'am, but when the sun hits them, they look like they lighten up, but after they dry out, it seems like the color begins to come back to them.

M: Is cherry dark when you cut it?

A: Well, that's what I was talking about, mulberry and cherry. We don't have much walnut and holly here either.

M: Did you cut those sometimes, too?

A: Yes, I cut them.

M: Would they be marketed?

A: Yes, I'd market them just like you do the rest of them. Walnut is one of the most expensive timbers you can buy. In days gone by, they tell me, there had been quite a bit of walnut in this country.

M: Oh, really? In the virgin timber?

A: Virgin timber.

M: But you never saw any of those, in virgin stands?

A: No, well no, I wouldn't say that I actually saw the virgin; I saw some mighty big old trees. But they would be the scrubby ones that were left. You know, you just don't get every tree. You miss them all along, just like you do when you go fishing, you don't catch every fish in the creek.

M: When you got a tree that was special like a cherry, or a mulberry, or walnut, would you keep that separate and market it separate?

A: Well, now we'd ship it. Only if I decided that I wanted some of the lumber, then I would get that out. I'd keep that lumber until it dried, and then I'd have it dressed.

M: So sometimes you'd keep it for your own purposes?

A: Yes.

M: But when you sent it to Seitz lumberyard . . . ?

A: It just went, just like the rest of it.

M: And so the price that you'd get would be along with the rest?

A: Along with the rest.

M: And the people at the lumberyard wouldn't even realize that they had a special piece there?

A: Well, I suppose they would realize. The labor didn't, but of course, the Seitz Lumber Company knew. You see, they got orders for lumber from all over the world.

M: What I'm wondering is, would those logs be grouped all with the rest?

A: No, no. See they would separate this lumber at the lumberyard. When they'd get an order for walnut or cedar or whatever it is they had collected enough of this rare species until they would have enough to fill the order. Then they would ship it out.

M: How was the lumber identified? Was the man at the lumberyard skilled enough in identifying wood that when he got a log he knew what he had?

A: Sure, he knew every log in the woods, was supposed to. If he didn't, he wasn't supposed to be a lumberman.

M: So you never had to tell him what you were bringing?

A: I never had to tell him. Of course, I always knew what I was bringing because I knew enough about it to know what it was. And he did, too. I knew what it was before it was cut down.

M: What about the size of trees? Would you find that certain species were consistently smaller logs?

A: Oh, yes. You never did find too big a mulberry and not too big a cherry. Now I have cut some sassafras, what they called sassafras timber.

M: Would that get big, too?

A: It'll get big enough to sawmill, but it never did get big timber like oak and pine.

M: What would that be used for?

A: Just lumber, I reckon. See, when you're building a house, if you're siding the stuff and using it on decking and everything to put a roof on, any kind of lumber will do.

M: When you're out in the woods cutting, would you ever depend on some of the plants in the woods for supplementing your lunches?

A: No, ma'am.

M: You didn't pick berries in the woods?

A: No, ma'am. We always carried our lunch. Of course, if we passed blackberries or something like that, we would eat a handful of them. Now, there is one bush in the wood that we'd go and gather a lot of it, when we were able. And that's huckleberries.

M: Oh, you had huckleberries around here?

A: Of course, they grow mostly up in Alabama. In any sandy and clay hills, you'll find huckleberries.

M: I've gathered huckleberries, too. (laughter)

A: Well, you know then that they're just like blueberries, except the huckleberry is the original, and it's got a much better flavor.

M: Are they a darker color than the blueberry?

A: Well, I wouldn't say they're darker; they're not as large as a blueberry, but they are so much better flavored.

M: Did you ever gather mushrooms?

A: Well, I was always afraid of them. I never would eat mushrooms.

M: Did you ever have any trouble with snakes in the woods?

A: Oh sure, you had to watch for them everyday.

M: Do you remember any particular experience with snakes?

A: Well, I never was bit by none of them, but I've killed some mighty big rattlesnakes.

M: Did any of your men ever get bitten?

A: No, we never did get bitten. Some of them have run some very narrow risks. Most people in the woods, those timbermen, watched for those things.

M: Did you ever cut timber when there was snow on the ground or when it was very, very cold?

A: I remember a time or two when we would have to quit. When the timber would get frozen, you can't cut it. When I'd get too cold, we'd just have to quit. But this country really don't get like that too much. Of course, I saw it once here thirteen below zero. The Tombigbee River froze over.

M: Do you remember what year that was?

A: It was 1940. We had snow thirteen inches deep.

M: Are mulberry and cherry woods gone now?

A: Yes, ma'am, it's a wood that's almost gone, except in bushes. The old original is all gone. That kind of timber takes so long to grow. I guess the tree that cabinet was made out of was probably two hundred years old. You can't tell, you see.

M: Oak takes a long time, too, doesn't it?

A: Well, oak will grow fairly good.

M: Does it?

A: Not too good. I've got some good timber that was cut in 1950, and it has grown up, it's real nice and that's about thirty years, isn't it? When you are going through cutting oak, if you cut it too small, it takes it fifteen years to begin to get up size enough to really start growing. The best I remember, it takes a pine tree about seventy years to make a real good tree. You see, they got to come up thick; the weak will die out and the strong will get taller. Now as far as I am concerned, this Weyerhaeuser timber will never make a plank.

M: Is that right?

A: See, they plant it spaced out and it grows up with limbs from the ground to the top. It's bushy and it will always be so knotty that you can't use it for lumber. If that pine was broadcast, it would take it longer to grow. If those seeds were broadcast and then came up, they'd grow up spindly, make a long, tall tree, and of course, they would die out where they are too thick. That's why it takes so long to make a big tree. But then the lumber will be good in that kind of tree. It will be clear of knots.

M: So by spacing it in even spaces they're defeating the purpose of getting a good piece of lumber out of that?

A: That's my belief about it. You see, the limbs start on it from the ground up. Those knots, as the limbs rot off or get broke or something, that'll heal up and go into that tree, you see. It'll be in that tree as long as it is a tree.

M: The knot will always be there?

A: That's right.

M: Will it also get sort of dark and sort of rotten in that knot?

A: Well, pine really doesn't get rotten. Not necessarily, it will heal over and grow up solid. Of course, after those trees get big, if a big limb gets broke off, it'll probably rot in the tree a piece. And those don't ever heal over if they are too large, but I'm talking about when those little trees are planted. I don't believe they'll ever make a tree for lumber. But you see, they grind them up; it doesn't make any difference to them.

M: Oh, so you figure they're planting these trees not for lumber but for pulp?

A: That's right, pulp. And I guess, they'll get big enough; they probably are now. They press this sawdust together and make a lot of different stuff, cardboard, beaverboard, so on and so forth. I don't know the names of it all, but anyway that's what they make it out of. You see, they use everything now but the bark. I believe they use the bark in some of those flowers, you know.

VA: It's a mulch.

M: For mulching around the flower plants.

A: They use everything now, where we used to burn it up. That's what I was telling you about, when we had the little mill.

M: Did you do that periodically? Would you have certain spots where you would collect your waste and just burn it?

A: Yeah, right there at the mill. We had to burn it there at the mill. See, it would get in the way until we couldn't work.

M: How often would you be moving your mill from one place to another?

A: Oh, sometimes we would set in a place for not over six months, sometimes for a year or two, depending on how much timber we had there.

M: Someone told me about playing in trees when they were little. Did you ever see kids play in trees and bend the trees way over?

A: Oh sure, I saw children play in them and bend them over.

M: Did they have to use a certain kind of tree for that?

A: Well, no. Of course, some trees would grow bricly, wouldn't bend good. But a gum, hickory, or anything. A pine you didn't do it with that; the tops would break out. It was a soft timber and the tops would break out. But any kind of hardwood you could bend over and play with it.

M: Did you ever do that when you were a kid?

A: Yes, ma'am, I've done that lots of times.

M: Was that kind of common for kids to get in the trees and swing the tops around?

A: Sure, it was because they didn't have television to watch then, and radio and things to listen at. They had to make their own recreation.

M: Would you ever swing the tree right down to the ground?

A: Sure. Maybe sometimes it would take two. There would have to be two climbing it before you could bend it over.

M: (laughter)

A: You see, they didn't. . . . It would just be a small sapling. You see, children didn't have parks to play in, only in the big cities. Of course, they never got to see the big cities.

M: So, this was common for kids to get into trees and swing around?

A: Sure. And get up on the hillsides on old planks and things and slide down, make little old wagons and ride down, and so on. They had to make their own recreation.

M: What about little horses? Would you have stick horses?

A: Well, yeah. I remember when I was real small, my father bought me and my brother a little rocking horse. That was the first one I had ever saw. But they'd play all kinds of games and everything like that.

M: I was thinking of those hobby horses that kids made out of branches. Did you ever do that?

A: Oh, I saw kids get straddle of a stick, run with it and act like it was a horse. They do that yet, sometimes.

M: At Christmastime, do you remember anything special about how you celebrated Christmas? Of course, you were in Alabama but they might have done the same things that they did over here.

A: Oh, sure.

M: Did you ever hear of them doing anything like they called serenading?

A: Yeah, I have heard of that. I never was in none of it much but. . . .

M: But you know what it was about?

A: When a new family would move in a community, what used to be very common, they would do what was called "serenading" them. That was the way they had of trying to show their appreciation and their welcome. But now, you see somebody would get shot because folk don't believe. All of that has left the country.

M: So, this wasn't necessarily connected with Christmas. It was just when somebody moved in?

A: That's right, when somebody moved in.

M: Would there be a lot of noise making with it?

A: Oh, sure. Beating old plows, ringing cowbells and everything. (laughter)

M: When you were little, did you ever hang up your stocking for Christmas?

A: Yeah, I hung up my stocking. (laughter) I'd find something in it the next morning. Apple, maybe a piece of candy, an orange but that was about that.

M: That was about the extent of Christmas?

A: That was about the extent of Christmas.

M: Well, I think that I have pretty well covered it. Can you think of anything else that occurs to you?

A: No, not really.

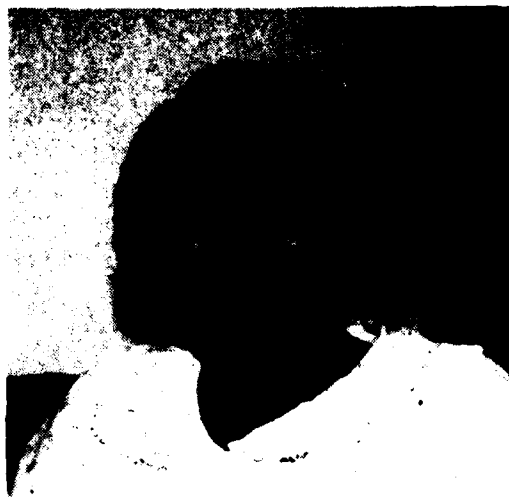
M: I think you've done a good job, and I really appreciate it. On behalf of the Project and myself I thank you a lot.

A: Well, of course, I would like to be a help. I just want to tell the truth, tell it just like it was.

M: I know you have, and every little piece of information does help us.

THTP - Oral History Interview OH 124
An interview with
Jennie Mae Lenoir

conducted and edited by
James M. McClurken



Jennie Lenoir was born in the community of Waverly, Mississippi on January 27, 1904. In 1923 she married and moved to her husband's home at Vinton. She was the daughter of a farmer and is a farmer's wife. Much of the interview deals with farming and the responsibilities of farm life. She also relates the history of Shady Grove Church and provides insight on the importance of the church in the community. She discusses the celebration of holidays and tells of the kinds of entertainment available in the community.

The interview with Mrs. Lenoir was conducted in her home by James McClurken on February 19, 1980.

M: This is an interview with Mrs. Jennie Mae Lenoir for the Tombigbee Historic Townsites Project by James M. McClurken. The interview is taking place at her home on February 19, 1980. Mrs. Lenoir's address is Route 2, Box 238, West Point, Mississippi 39773. Her telephone number is 494-1506.

Mrs. Lenoir, can we start this off by my asking you when you were born?

L: I was born January 27, 1904.

M: Were you born here?

L: I was born here in the Waverly community, and I lived in the Waverly community for nineteen years. I got married when I was nineteen years old, and moved over to the Town Creek community. We lived over there for about fourteen years, I think. That's where I began my family at. Me and my husband, now we lived happily. He was always the man of the house, and I was the lady of the house. He made provisions from the outside, and I have taken care of all the inside, preparing meals everyday, and on and on.

Well, we began to start our family. We got married on February 25, 1923. On February 27, 1924, my first child was born. On August 15 of the next year, my second child was born, and my third child was born in 1927. The next one, a son, was born in 1929. My younger daughter was born in 1931, and my baby, another son, was born in 1933.

We always had a Christian home, had a happy home, a lovely home, and we reared our children together. We all were church folks. I came to church at an early age. My mother carried me to Sunday school and church when I was large enough to remember, and so that part of my life is still there. We have taken our children to Sunday school and church, and we sent them to school as far as we were able to send them.

At first it was a walkway to school. There weren't buses for the black children then, regardless of the distance. They had to walk one, two, three, four miles, or maybe farther. I was lucky to not be quite so far from the school. The children went to school. My first son finished the tenth grade, then the army called him. He went into service for three years. My older daughter finished the eleventh grade and then got married. The third son finished eighth grade and didn't want to go to school any farther. The fourth son finished the twelfth grade and got married. My youngest daughter finished twelfth grade and lacked a few hours of finishing four years of college. She got two years of college at Mary Holmes and got the other at Holly Springs. When she lacked just a few hours of finishing, she got married to a serviceman. They began to travel

and so life was very beautiful. I will have been married for fifty-seven years next Monday which is the 25th of this month.

M: Congratulations.

L: Thank you. Me and my husband have lived happily. We are always with the Lord's help. We always were able to provide food and clothes for the children. He never let us get hungry; we haven't ever been hungry in our lives. I counted it as a blessing. I have a loving husband, he's a wonderful husband and I would call him a generous father. He loved all of the children, and the children all loved him. We've just been one happy family.

M: What's your first memory in childhood? What's the very first thing that you can recall?

L: The first thing that I can recall in childhood is my mother taking me to church. That was my first remembrance in childhood.

M: What church did she take you to?

L: Shady Grove at Waverly. It's north of Highway 50, on the old Waverly Road that leads to the community center. There's a road that turns left off Highway 50 and goes on around. Some houses are built all along that road there, and the church is right up on a hill.

M: Did she carry you to church?

L: Yes, my mother carried me to church, and that's the first thing I can remember. I remember one other thing that happened. I had two brothers. My father had a real gentle horse, and the brother tied the horse to a peach tree we had sitting in the yard. My brother tied the horse too long with the rope, and it got tangled up in the rope. Oh, he was about to kill himself or something. A strange man was passing along on the road. He stopped his horse and buggy, and he jumped out, ran there, cut that rope, and freed the horse from his struggle.

M: Do you remember what your house looked like, the one that you lived in when you were a wee young child?

L: Yes, I do. The house where I was born was two rooms with a dirt hallway between them. (laughter) You know, it didn't have a plank floor. There was a room sitting over here and one over yonder and the vacant hall was in between.

M: Was it made of logs?

L: I don't remember whether it was made of logs or not now, but it seems to me like one of the rooms was log. I can't just altogether remember that. (laughter)

M: How long did you live there before you moved to this town?

L: We lived there for three years; my father lived there for three years. Then he moved just across the line to the road onto this same place where this mansion is, but it was up the road near this church I was telling you about. I lived there until I was married. That was about seventeen years. (laughter)

M: Do you remember more about that house?

L: Yes.

M: I'm curious to know what kind of furniture you had in your house.

L: Well, the furniture it was made, then. I mean, the headboard was high and flat on top. It just had a little, narrow, strip, you know, on top and also at the foot.

M: Was it a fancy bed?

L: Oh, yes. In this time it would be called fancy, and of course, I have the dresser yet that was with some of that furniture.

M: Did you have a kitchen table and chairs, too?

L: Yes, we had the kitchen table and chairs, too. My mother said that her mother gave that table to her when she got married. My mother was reared at this table, and she reared her three children at that table. My younger brother passed kind of early in life and left three children. Mother reared those three children at that table. When she passed, and my father turned things go, he let me have the table. I cherish it very much, but did not have room here for it where I could care for it. I have taken it to the church. We have a dining area in the back of the church, and so I taken it there. I get a chance to see it every Sunday. It has the little marble coasters on it. You could roll it about, you know. It's one of the choice pieces next to my heart.

M: Did you have a separate sitting room in the house?

L: Well, yes, of course we sat in the bedrooms, then. It wasn't a den or a living room as it is, now.

M: How many rooms did this house have?

L: This house had three rooms. It had two bedrooms, a hallway between them, and a large kitchen.

M: Was this house made out of log?

L: No, it was made out of plank.

M: Was it up off of the ground?

L: Yes, it was up off of the ground, the hallway didn't have the dirt floor like the one where I was born at.

M: Did it have a sleeping loft upstairs?

L: No, no upstairs.

M: What kind of pans did your mother cook in?

L: Well, they had the old original iron pot, the iron frying pans, and their bread pans as they called them. I don't know whether they were made out of steel or tin, but they were black pans. They called them biscuit pans and corn bread pans.

M: Did she cook on a stove or over a fireplace?

L: On the stove. I haven't ever cooked over the fireplace. No, I don't think I could have made it so well over that. (laughter) We were always fortunate enough to have a stove. We cooked in the stove, bake bread.

M: Did your mother ever tell you any stories about when she was a girl growing up?

L: Yes, she would tell us stories, but I have just about forgotten all of them. (laughter)

M: Are there any that you'd like to preserve for your children?

L: Well, the children of this day, they call that too far back. They don't even like to even mention the things that happened on their way up, because they hated farm life so bad.

M: Was your daddy a farmer?

L: Yes, he was a farmer.

M: What were your mother's and dad's names?

L: My father was named Robert Warren and my mother was named Parolee Warren, Parolee Ferguson Warren.

M: Did you farm here in the Waverly community?

L: Yes, I was born and reared around in the Waverly community. So, these two churches. . . . Mt. Pisgah Church, right here as you come off Highway 50, used to sit back on the Waverly Sandy-land Road by Mr. Ivy's house. That is a road coming from West Point into the Waverly community. Then, Young's Chapel, a Methodist church, sat below this last house. You might could see it by looking into the bushes.

M: Do you remember brush arbors?

L: No, I don't remember the brush arbors. I heard my mother and grandmother talk about it. They would talk about the brush arbors but I never witnessed them.

M: Was your grandmother alive when you were a girl?

L: Yes, she was; she lived. She died about one month before I got married, but she lived in the Delta section. She didn't live up here. She had moved from here before I was born, and they went to the Delta. Down about Ittabena in the Delta.

M: Your grandmother must have been alive during slave times.

L: Well, I'm sure she was. Of course, she didn't ever talk about slavery times.

M: Was she from the Waverly area before she moved to the Delta?

L: No. Her home was in Pickensville, Alabama. They moved from there over into Lowndes County by Cedar Grove Church, up there above the air base. They lived there for awhile, and then she said they moved over to the upper area up here by Union Star, to the community they called Major's Quarter. I think they said that Major Young was related to the ones who owned this mansion place, and they moved up there on his farm for awhile. I don't know just how long. That's where my mother said she got married.

M: Did she talk about her courtship any? How your mother and father courted each other?

L: No, well, no, not too much. My father was a right smart older than she was, and she was his second wife. His first wife had passed, and didn't ever say anything much about their courting life.

M: How did you meet your husband?

L: I met him at church. I was a church-goer, a member of the church. I loved the church, and so did he. As boys would do then, they would go to other churches looking for the girls. I met him at church.

M: How long did he have to court you before you decided that you wanted to marry him?

L: We went together for about two years because parents in those days weren't like the parents are now. The girl had to be sixteen before she could have company. When the girl became sixteen, they would usually give her a birthday party and give the boys privilege to come to see her. I met him in March and we began going together.

M: What did you do when you were courting? Did you go visit towns?

L: Well, no, mostly we visited churches. That's where we'd usually go. They used to have ball games, and dinners on certain holidays and things like that, on the Eighth of May and Fourth of July.

M: What's special about the Eighth of May? What holiday is that?

L: Well, it was proclaimed as when we first got our freedom word from slavery, so that was called the National Negro Holiday. So they celebrated it. History proclaimed that we were freed in January, but they didn't let it be known to us until the Eighth of May.

M: Did everybody down here have a big celebration?

L: Yes, we had a big celebration.

M: I bet your grandmother was real happy on that day.

L: Oh, yes. They were very happy, happy.

M: What kind of things did you do at your celebration?

L: Oh, they would have drum beating, ball games, and the people that liked to would dance. They would just have a big celebration.

M: You said beating the drum. What kind of drum did they play?

L: I don't know. They called them the bass drums. They were great big drums, and you could hear them for miles. They called them bass drums; I don't know what kind they were.

M: Did the men play them?

L: Yes. One man would play the big drum, and they had one they called the kettle drum. One man would play the big drum and one would play the little one.

M: What kind of things did they play with it? What kind of music?

L: Well, I wouldn't know what kind of music they were playing.

M: But it was good to dance to?

L: Oh, yes. Just the sound, you know, that's the most that any of them go for, the sound of it. Now they watch television to get the sound of music.

M: So do they still celebrate the Eighth of May here?

L: Well no, not now. They have just about let that passed. It seems just like any other day, now. The older people who cherished the day are mostly gone, and the younger people have got to the place where they can celebrate any day they want to. (laughter) All of them are celebration days with the younger people.

M: But you had to work everyday when you were growing up?

L: Well, I was fifteen years old when I went to work in the field. Before that, my father always left me at the house to take care of the housework.

M: And your brothers went out to the field?

L: Yes, he, my mother, and my brothers went out to the field and left me at the house to take care of the house, to do the housecleaning, the cooking, and the seeing after the chickens and the turkeys and watering the hogs, and all of the things like that.

M: What time in the morning did your daddy and brothers get up to go out to work in the fields?

L: Oh, sometimes at about six o'clock, seven at the latest.

M: Did you have to get up and cook them a big breakfast before they went out?

L: Well, my mother would always cook the breakfast. She would get up and cook the breakfast before they went out.

M: Did you have to wash the clothes?

L: Yes, when I got large enough, I would wash their clothes and do their ironing.

M: Did your mother work in the fields, too?

L: Yes, she worked in the field, too.

M: Where did you do your wash?

L: Well, we had a well in the yard that they called a cistern well. You draw water with a bucket on a windlass.

M: Did you have a wooden bucket on the end of your rope?

L: Yes, had a wooden bucket on the end of the rope.

M: Did that have a metal handle on it?

L: Yes, it had a metal handle. We also had washpots. That's where we heat our water. At first it was a wooden tub. They would take these big sixty-gallon molasses barrels, saw that in two, and make two tubs out of it. There were some men through the country who could make washboards. They would take a piece of plank and a chisel, and they would cut grooves in the plank. That's what we washed on.

M: So you had a handmade washboard?

L: Yes.

M: Did you use homemade soap, too?

L: Yes, my mother used to make soap, and I've used homemade soap.

Through the winter, my father would usually burn hickory wood and some oak. They claim that they made the strongest ashes. My mother would save those ashes through the winter, and in the spring, she would take a old cotton basket, and my father would build her a little stand to sit this basket on. She would put some hay in the bottom of the basket, put the ashes on top of this hay, and then she would pour water in there. When that water went through these ashes, the lye drained out. She'd sit a tub under the scaffold that the basket was on, and this water would go through those ashes and drip down into that tub. It would be kind of red or look kind of like vinegar, but it would be strong, strong as the devil. Lye is strong. (laughter) She would take this lye and put it in her washpot. All through the winter when she be cooking, she would save all the waste fat and stuff that she had. She'd have buckets to preserve it in. She would take that fat, put it in that lye, put a fire around it, and cook it. When it cooked down to a certain consistency, it'll be soap.

M: Did you use that soap for washing?

L: Yes.

M: Yourself as well as the clothes?

L: Well, no. No, we didn't use it for baths. We would buy a bar of soap for a bath. The names were P & G, Octavian, and I can't remember the other kind. (laughter)

M: Did you take your bath in the house?

L: Yes.

M: All year long?

L: Yes, in the house, in the kitchen. You just bring a tub in the kitchen, heat your water on the stove, put it in the tub and take your bath.

M: Did anybody have a bathtub back in those days?

L: No, if they did, I didn't know it. (laughter)

M: That was a big luxury, huh?

L: Yes.

M: Did your mother ever make cloth? Did she ever spin?

L: No, she didn't ever spin.

M: Would your grandmother remember that maybe?

L: Well, my grandmother said that she used to spin some. Her mother,

my great-grandmother, was a spinner. My grandmother said that she would help her sometimes.

M: Did she ever describe the wheel that she used?

L: Yes, they said it was a big, old, round wheel. It was something like a wagon wheel, and it had a crank on it someway that you would turn it and I can't. . . .

M: That was a long time ago?

L: Yes, that was a long time ago, and I can't just tell how she said it.

M: When you got married, did you have to leave your home community?

L: Yes, I left my home community and went there to my husband's community.

M: What was it like making the move to Town Creek community?

L: Well, I didn't think much of it at first. I didn't know the people, only his family. I knew a few more people who lived kind of a distance, but it was just nothing like home. But I soon got adjusted, and the main point of it was that I was with him. That was the happiest part of it all.

M: Can you describe the house that you moved into?

L: Yes, it was just like the one that I moved out of only it had a little more room. It had three rooms, a dining room and a kitchen.

M: Oh, so it was a house with an open hallway in between?

L: No, this hall closed.

M: And then you had a room off each one of the big rooms?

L: That's right.

M: Now, were the rooms in the back of the house or on the side of the house?

L: Well, two were on the front, and the others were on the back.

M: Was the house up off of the ground?

L: Yes, it was up off the ground.

M: Could you tell me where it sat?

L: Well, do you know where London Chapel Church is sitting, up on the hill where you go to Mrs. Shirley's? Well, it was right down behind

the church. It's just a short distance down that road by London Chapel.

M: All the way to the end of the road?

L: Well, not quite to the end of the road. When you go down this road behind London Chapel, you go up a little hill. Then you go down this little hill and across another little valley. Right up on top of the next hill, right there to the left, that's where it sits. It had some crepe-iron trees in the yard.

M: Was it an old house when you moved into it?

L: Well, yes. It was my husband's family home. All of them were born there, I think, born and reared there.

M: Did his father build the house?

L: Yes.

M: What was his father's name?

L: He was named Professor Andrew Lenoir. He was a schoolteacher.

M: What people did you meet when you first moved in there?

L: Well, I met the Shirley family and the Daugherty family. That was my husband's older brother's wife's family.

M: Who is Mr. Daugherty?

L: That was Andrew Lenoir's wife's family.

M: Did they live back by you?

L: Well, they lived down by Town Creek. That was a short distance then, you know, because people didn't mind walking.

M: Did he live down on the Zack Ellis's place?

L: No, he lived joining the Zack Ellis's place. The Daughertys owned their home down there, then. The Ellis place was joining the Daugherty place.

M: I see.

L: Do you know a man who lives right up from Town Creek Church named Mr. Easter. Right where his house is, that's where the Daughertys used to live.

M: Did you know Mr. Larry Keaton?

L: Yes, I knew him after I got married.

M: Was he an old man when you got married?

L: Yes, he was.

M: Where did he live?

L: Well, he lived on up that Barton Ferry Road east of Mr. Homer Tumlinson, way up on the corner they called the "four fork," then. It goes straight on by Town Creek Church and on up the road it turns to go back to West Point. Well, he lived in the house sitting right on this corner where you turn to go to West Point.

M: So he didn't live down by the church community?

L: No, he didn't live down there.

M: Did you know any of the Trotters?

L: I knew one man, but they lived out in another community.

M: What community was it?

L: In Concob community, back up in that way.

M: Did you know Miss Lucy Natcher?

L: Yes, I did. I knew her from when I was a little child. She nursed the invalid of the Watson's. She used to ride down the road to Waverly in a buggy with him. She'd stop many a day at our house to get fresh water for him to drink.

M: What was she like? Do you remember her?

L: Just that she was a fair looking lady.

M: You didn't pay much attention to her when you were a girl?

L: No. She was still living and nursing this man when I got married.

M: Yeah? Did you ever run into her and have her recognize you after you got married?

L: Yeah, she recognized me.

M: Did you know Mr. Jesse Dukeminier?

L: Yes, I knew Mr. Jesse Dukeminier.

M: Did he live down by you?

L: Well, he lived there for a short while. No, I don't think he lived down there, but he owned a farm just down at Town Creek where Mr. Homer Tumlinson lives. He used to own that in there. I know that

my husband lost a mule once, and our landlord contacted him about a mule. He had one that he sold my husband.

M: Yeah, did you know Mr. Cox?

L: Cox? No. Where did he live?

M: I know that he owned land just south of the land that you and your husband lived on, but I don't know who he is.

L: I don't know either, but they called that place Cox's. I don't know why; I never did go into it. When everybody spoke of that place over there, they say, "down on Cox's," but I didn't know him.

M: How about Mr. March Montgomery?

L: March Montgomery, I've known him from a little kid, too, because my father. . . . His parents died when he was very small. He was kind of an orphan, living from place to place. He said that March Montgomery's oldest daughter wasn't married, and she was keeping house for him. She was milking cows, and she would give them milk and butter.

M: Did he live down by you when you were up at Town Creek community?

L: No. He passed before I got married. That's Peter Montgomery's father. Peter Montgomery and my husband are first cousins.

M: I see.

L: They are two sisters' children. March Montgomery married my husband's mother's sister.

M: Did you know Mr. Summer Moore?

L: Yes, I knew him.

M: Can you tell me a little bit about him?

L: Well, only that he was a very friendly man. He was what I would call it our "fun-box" for the community. (laughter)

M: What's that? Did he sing?

L: Yes, he would sing, tell a lot of different funny jokes, and one thing and another like that.

M: What kind of songs did he sing?

L: Well, he would sing spiritual songs.

M: Were they church songs?

- L: Yes, he'd sing spiritual songs. They were those old songs that always sounds good.
- M: Where did you have your get togethers when he'd come and sing for you? Did he just sing in the street?
- L: Oh, he would just be around sometimes. We would have Thanksgiving dinners at the church or something, and he would come by. He was a churchman, too.
- M: What about Mr. Joe Harris?
- L: Joe Harris, well I just knew Mr. Joe Harris to be just Mr. Joe Harris. (laughter) Yes, I know him, but I don't know of anything he did.
- M: I wanted to ask you where Summer Moore lived?
- L: Summer Moore lived up there in the Vinton community. He was a caretaker of Henry Watson's camp. He lived back up in there near the camp.
- M: Now can you tell me a little more exactly where he lived? Did he live to the west or north of Henry Watson's camphouse?
- L: I can't place now where that house was, but it was kind of up on the hill from the camphouse.
- M: Was it an old house or was it something that he had built?
- L: I ain't sure, but I think Mr. Watson had it built for him.
- M: Did he work for Mr. Watson?
- L: That's right.
- M: What was Mr. Watson like?
- L: Oh, he was a fine man.
- M: Did he raise a lot of crops there?
- L: Yes. My husband was telling you about this whole farm line down there where the Watson place joins this other place you were asking him about. That's the Hutchinson place or something. Anyway, Watson's land joined this Hutchinson place, and it came back south. It's south of it. It's in the bottom. The Willis Branch runs through there. Mr. Watson had land all back there. He owned out in front of Mrs. Shirley, and it went clean on back to the river back in there.
- M: What kind of crops did he keep?

- L: Cotton was his favorite in those times, cotton and corn.
- M: Did he ever raise any vegetables or were the vegetables all raised in gardens by houses?
- L: No, he didn't raise any vegetables. Each family that desired vegetables raised their own vegetables.
- M: Were the women responsible for the vegetable gardens?
- L: Well, both. The man had to plow it up when they needed it. It was just kind of teamwork.
- M: What kind of things did you raise in your garden?
- L: I raised string beans, butter beans, turnips, mustard, carrots, spinach, and okra. I don't hardly raise cabbage or collard greens because me and my husband can't eat them. I stopped raising them.
- M: Yeah. Did you gather things from the woods as well?
- L: Well, no, such as berries and plums, no. I didn't gather any of them because we don't care for them either. (laughter)
- M: But some people do?
- L: Oh, yes some people do. I used to gather a few plums, but after my son-in-law moved home, he sat out a plum orchard. I get more plums than I want because he'd have plenty of plums.
- M: Did you have an orchard by the house you lived in at Town Creek community?
- L: Yes, I had a little peach orchard.
- M: Did you can?
- L: Oh, did I can! Oh, did I can!
- M: Tell me how much you had to can to feed your family?
- L: Oh, well it's hard to estimate. They were small when I lived at Town Creek. They were small, but I couldn't can under two hundred and fifty quarts at that time. As they grew older and larger, it took more to do them. After we moved down here, the home demonstration agent gave us lessons how to can any kind of vegetables and save it. We bought pressure cookers then and you can preserve anything with a pressure cooker.
- M: Didn't you have a pressure cooker when you lived up at Town Creek?
- L: No, I didn't have one.

M: How did you do your canning then?

L: Well, it was with a hot water bath. You peeled the fruit and got it ready for canning, washed it, put it on the stove in a pan with a little water and sugar. If you were going to sweeten it any or make preserves, you know you would do it different from fresh home canning. When you were just going to can fresh fruit without any sugar, you just cook it, put your water on the stove, put your jars in a pan, and let them get real hot, and put your fruit in there and seal it up.

M: Did you have a big wood stove that you did this on at your house?

L: Yes. I had a pretty good-sized wood stove.

M: Where did you get your water when you lived up there?

L: Well, I got my water from across the road at Sister Shirley's. They had a well down so I would get water from over there. They had an artesian well.

M: Is the house that Mrs. Shirley lives in now the original Shirley house?

L: No, they tore the original down. Her husband just built that one a few years ago.

M: What did the Shirley's house look like when you first moved out there?

L: Well, when I first moved out there, it had one log room and one plank room.

M: Did it have a barn behind it?

L: Yes, it had a barn down on the corner of it, kind of back. It wasn't centered back, you know, but it was out.

M: And did your house have a barn with it, too?

L: Yes, my husband has always been a busy man so he built him a barn.

M: What did you do when somebody got sick?

L: Well, they did what they knew to do, for far as they could.

M: What kind of medicines did they use that you remember?

L: Well, they used patent medicines such as aspirins, and chill tonic if you had chills, Three S, and on like that.

M: What other brand names can you remember?

- L: Well, they had one they called St. Joseph's Liver Regulator and another called Black Draught. There's a box of Black Draught sitting up there, now. I just keep it for a souvenir because I don't take it anymore. (laughter) Those were mostly the medicines that they used.
- M: Did anybody know medicines from the woods?
- L: No, not as I know of, only for a cold. It's a weed that grew. It ain't a weed; I don't know what it is. It's a plant that grows. They call it mullen.
- M: Did they make a tea out of it?
- L: Yes, they'd make a tea out of that for colds in the winter. Sometimes, if the cold is kind of severe, they would put some castor oil in that mullen tea. They would use pine tops; they would make tea out of that for colds. If their chest would be so choked up or something like that, they would get some tallow and heat it, melt it, put it on a flannel cloth, and put some turpentine on it and place that on the chest.
- M: Sort of like Vicks?
- L: Yes.
- M: Did you ever have a doctor?
- L: Yes, whenever they saw that it was necessary for a doctor, they would get a doctor.
- M: Was that the same in your mother's time?
- L: Well, yes. It was the same in my mother's time.
- M: Who were the doctors when you were living out there?
- L: Dr. Price Ivy and Dr. Spalding, Dr. Dean, and Dr. Ellis, and a black doctor named Dr. Zuber.
- M: How do you spell his name?
- L: Z-U-B-E-R.
- M: Were they all in West Point?
- L: Yes.
- M: There weren't any doctors living out your way?
- L: No, only Dr. Uithoven. He wasn't registered with the town or nothing. I don't know what nationality he was, but that's his son that lives down on the river, now. But anyway, he was a good doctor. People

have different ailments and they would go to him, tell him, he would give them medicine, and it would help them.

M: Were there any other people living down by the river, other than Dr. Uithoven?

L: No one else living down in that way, but the man that took care of the ferry.

M: And who was that?

L: He was named Tommy Hawkins, so they called him Bear.

M: Where did he live?

L: He lived in a little house right up on the hill by the river. They had him a little house built up there.

M: What kind of house was that?

L: Oh, it was just a . . . I don't know what kind of house they call them, but it was just some planks nailed together.

M: It was a plank house, not a log house?

L: Yes, that's right.

M: Did it have a central hall in it?

L: I can't remember one.

M: Did it have a front porch?

L: No.

M: Did it have wood shingles?

L: If I make no mistake, I think it had tin shingles.

M: Were there any other old houses up there, other than the one that Mr. Hawkins lived in?

L: No, not as I remember.

M: Do you remember any old buildings that were scattered around through the woods in there or didn't you go out in the woods much?

L: No, I didn't ever go out in the woods. I'm afraid of snakes, and I don't do much traveling through the woods unless somebody is with me to keep the snakes off.

M: Did your children play in the woods much?

- L: No, they didn't ever play in the woods much. They had such a large opening around the hill there. Of course, there were a few trees around the house, back down on the ditch out in the pasture. They would play out there some, but they didn't ever bother about going to the woods much. They weren't searchers. (laughter)
- M: Do you remember a building that Mr. John Poss lived in?
- L: No, I didn't know him.
- M: There was a building that sat right down by the Vinton Cemetery. Miss Lucy Natcher lived behind it.
- L: Yes, I remember the building that Miss Lucy Natcher lived in.
- M: Could you tell me what that looked like?
- L: No, I just really can't tell you. My husband could tell you what it looked like. I never was up in that part of the community much. I didn't really pay attention.
- M: Where did folks bury their people when they passed?
- L: Well, they mostly buried down here, where you come across the railroad. All of that is cemetery back in there.
- M: Is this down here at Waverly?
- L: Yes, we called it Pitchlyn Field.
- M: What about the people up by Vinton community?
- L: Well, most of them would go back toward Concob to bury. It's an old tradition to be buried where Mama or Daddy were buried at. Sometimes they would bring them down here to Pitchlyn or up to the Lee Hill Cemetery. There was another cemetery way up on the far corner of this road coming down from the west to Shady Grove. Those houses that are over on that road were part of a big farm there. It has a large cemetery called "Fields." So, they are mostly buried in these two and in the one over behind the mansion, the Tan Yard they call it. A lot of people used to bury over there.
- M: What kind of ceremony is hooked up with the funeral?
- L: Well, they have the program, song, prayer, and scripture reading, and then the life of a person as a neighbor, a church member, a Masonic member or whatever, and then the eulogy.
- M: Do they carry the person in a hearse?
- L: Yes.
- M: Did they carry them in wagons?

- L: Well, they carry them in a hearse, now.
- M: What did they do when you were a girl?
- L: Well, they carried them in wagons, then. There weren't any hearses.
- M: What kind of coffins did they have?
- L: Well, back when I was a girl, they had black coffins with the brass shiny knobs on them.
- M: Were they made out of wood?
- L: Yes. They were made out of wood and painted.
- M: Did somebody in the community make them?
- L: No, they would buy them from town.
- M: From West Point?
- L: Yes.
- M: Did you always do all of your shopping in West Point?
- L: Just about.
- M: Do you remember the days when the steamboats used to come up the river?
- L: No, not when they ran regularly, but once in awhile, maybe once a year, one would come up this way.
- M: Can you describe what they looked like or what they sounded like?
- L: Oh, no. I can't hardly describe it, but I know it was flat. It had a tall steeple-like thing on it. I didn't get close enough to see the inside. The last one that I saw going up the river had a man up on deck cutting wood for the stove. He was just cutting wood like he was out on the ground.
- M: Was this a big boat?
- L: Yes, it was a big boat.
- M: And did they come all the way up to Vinton community?
- L: Well, it was headed that way. I'm quite sure they said that they were going to Aberdeen. I was a child then and I wouldn't know how far it was going.
- M: What year do you think that would have been in?

L: Oh, I don't know. I was very small. I just had started going to school, and the teacher, whenever anything extra like that would come up, would dismiss the children so they could go and see. The parents had to be responsible for taking them, but she would let the school children out so they could go.

M: Did you hear the whistle?

L: Yes, I could hear the whistle. Some went up that I didn't see. I could hear the whistles from where we lived.

M: Was it a big deal when the steamboat came up?

L: Uh-huh.

M: How many children were there in your school when you were there?

L: Oh, I don't know. It was just a one-room building but it was just full of children. This used to be a "quarter." The people lived here and back over behind this house, back on what they now call the Kellogg place. There was a big quarter here, and around in Waverly was a pretty good-sized quarter. There was just a lot of children.

M: People still live pretty much in the old quarters?

L: No, the landlords tore all of that down.

M: What was your school like? Did it have desks in it?

L: It had one desk.

M: Were the rest just benches?

L: That's right, just benches.

M: Did you have a blackboard?

L: Yes, it had blackboards all around, three walls of them.

M: Three walls?

L: Yes, three walls of the school.

M: How big would you say the school building was?

L: Well, I wouldn't really know just how large it was.

M: Did you all have your own books?

L: Yes, you had to have your own books.

M: Where did you buy your books?

L: There was a bookstore in West Point where you could buy all of your books.

M: Did you go to West Point every week?

L: No, children back then didn't go to town often. They might have gone once or twice a year.

M: Was that a real special thing?

L: Uh-huh, it was. And coming up near to Christmas, a little child wouldn't go toward town. He would be too afraid that Santa Claus would be there. (laughter)

M: What did you do for a Christmas celebration?

L: Oh, we'd have a Christian part of life where we would have Sunday school and a service on Christmas morning. Then the children all went together playing, shooting their firecrackers, showing their presents, and one thing or another. There was a part of the young men and the young women who would always have their Christmas dances and things like that, guitar picking and all of those kinds of things.

M: Now, where did they have those?

L: Well, if there was an empty house in the neighborhood, they would have it in there. If there wasn't an empty house around, they would pack up the furniture out of one room of someone's house and have it in there. (laughter)

M: Yeah, what kind of presents did you get when you were a kid?

L: Oh, I got dolls, toy cats, little horns, little pianos, and things like that.

M: Did you get any homemade toys?

L: No, no homemade toys at all.

M: Were there any carpenters in your village or in your quarters when you were growing up?

L: Well, they weren't so skilled with timber, just common, you know. You would find a few who could basket weave.

M: Can you tell me how they make the baskets?

L: They would go to the woods. There's a certain kind of a timber that they would cut, split it up fine, and they would make splits about an inch wide, long strips. Then they would take those, put them down on the ground, and cross them like a wheel, lay a strip this way and a strip that way. Then they would take another strip

and start around it after they'd get the bottom built. Then they'd take that and go all around it.

M: How did they make their splits, with a jackknife?

L: Well, they had some kind of knife; I think they called it a draw-knife.

M: Did it have two handles?

L: Uh-huh.

M: Did they have a bench that they worked on?

L: Some of them did, and some didn't. There was one old man named Ike Wilson. He could weave willow. He would take little limbs off of the willow, and he could make the beautifulest basket you ever saw.

M: What did you use these baskets for?

L: Well, you could use them for taking lunch, use them for eggs. Some people use to take eggs and homemade butter to town in them, use them for those kinds of purposes. These baskets with big splits, they would be used to put cotton in. When you pick the cotton in the field, get your sack full, you would empty it in this basket.

M: How much did each basket hold?

L: Well, most of them would hold from a hundred to maybe a hundred and fifty pounds. Some would be larger.

M: That's a big lot of cotton, isn't it? (laughter)

L: Yes, it is for you to have to pull it out of the boll with your fingers.

M: How long did it take you to pick that much cotton?

L: What a hundred pounds?

M: Yeah.

L: It would take some people a half of a day. It would take some a whole day. Whenever I got a hundred, it took me all day. Of course, I would have other things that cut in between. I'd had to stop and cook dinner. If the family didn't come to the house for dinner, I would have to take it to them and let them have a picnic in the cotton patch. (laughter)

M: You owned your own farm, right? You and your husband?

L: Now, we do, but when we first married and were living over there in front of Mrs. Shirley's, we were living on Mr. Watson's then.

- M: Oh, so that wasn't your land?
- L: No, that's right. We were just renting.
- M: How much was your year's rent?
- L: Third and fourth, a third of the cotton and a fourth of the corn.
(laughter)
- M: Was that enough?
- L: Well, I don't know. It depends on how much you'd be able to make.
- M: So you had your good years, and you had your bad years?
- L: That's right. They had the good years and the bad years.
- M: What made for a bad year? What kind of thing hurt your crops?
- L: Well, the seasons mostly. Sometimes it was too wet and sometimes too dry. When it's too wet, the grass takes over and crops just can't make in the grass.
- M: Can't you hoe it out fast enough?
- L: When it's too wet, you can't even hoe, can't chop or plow.
- M: With a turning plow?
- L: Well, they used the cultivators.
- M: Yeah? When they were plowing, did they use wooden-sweep plows or did they use steel-sweep plows?
- L: Well, some would use steel and some would use wood.
- M: Can you remember the wooden plows?
- L: Yes, because my daddy was a real good farmer, and he believed in having good farm tools. He wouldn't buy the wooden sweepstock. He would buy the steel ones.
- M: I'm curious about what kind of fences you had on your place?
- L: For the barn, they had a split rail fence. I guess you've come around this road from West Point, around where Mr. Bryan's place has those rails laid in and out. Well that's the kind of fence that my daddy would use for his hogs and the mules. He didn't use it for the cows. He always had a wire fence for the cows.
- M: Did you ever have any old bodock fences?
- L: No. My husband used a few bodock posts, but my father didn't ever use any. He just used the common post oak.

M: Did you hang your clothes outside on clotheslines like we use now?

L: Yes.

M: Were they metal wire or were they cloth wire?

L: Metal wire.

M: Did you have to lock your doors when you were living up there?

L: Well, sometimes.

M: What kind of locks did you have?

L: Well, they were just the common flat locks with a key about that long.

M: So you just locked your doors from the inside?

L: Well, you would mostly lock it from the outside when you were going out. When you come in, no one ever bothered to lock the door.

M: Did you have windows in the house?

L: Yes, I had windows.

M: What about the one that you lived in when you were a little girl?

L: It had windows. I've always had windows.

M: Did it have shutters, too?

L: No shutters, just the plain window.

M: Shutters must have been done away with by then?

L: When you saw a shutter, it didn't have a glass.

M: I see. Were there some people who still didn't have glass windows?

L: That's right. I knew a lady who lived to be an old lady, and she hadn't ever lived in a house with the window glass in it until she got to be old. Oh, she didn't live many years after. All of her children were grown, and the biggest portion of her grandchildren were grown before she was able to live in a house with windows.

M: I bet she was real happy when she did get the windows.

L: One of her daughters said, "Lawd, I hope my mama won't take a heart attack because she is living in a house with windows where she can look out without having to push the shutters open." (laughter) So you can live and adjust yourself to anything.

M: It is not always the most pleasant thing to do, though.

L: No, it isn't too pleasant to do, but if you can't do it yourself and got to depend on somebody else to do it for you, it is better for you to adjust yourself to the condition. Some people regardless how you want something, they don't see it like that. They see you doing alright, and you've been doing like this all of your life. Some people don't ever plan for another step up in life. If you just don't have it, just make yourself contented and do the best you can. Maybe one day you can get it before you die.

M: You sound like you have had a very happy life.

L: Oh, it has been happy, exciting. . . .

M: Sounds like you worked awful hard, though.

L: Well, you know that's the way of life, it's work. I like to work, and that's the only way that you can have some of the things that you wanted. You have to work. I don't mind the work, you know. The most blessed thing is--and I thank the Lord for it--having a happy home. That's all of it. You don't even see the work; you don't even give it a thought. If you go out and have a hard day's work, come in with your family and everybody is jolly and happy, you can sit down and laugh and talk, forget about that hard work. If things are confused, you don't want to be there yourself, much less do anything there.

M: Did you visit with your neighbors quite a bit when you were living up in Town Creek? Did everybody come over to your house on Sunday afternoon or. . . ?

L: Well, yes. Some Sunday afternoons we would just have a lot of company because of the fact that we usually go from one church to the other on different Sundays, have service at different churches. This Sunday we're having church at my church, and I have the minister for dinner and everybody comes over.

M: I see.

L: It goes from one to the other like that, and it's real enjoyable.

M: You still bring the preacher home for a Sunday meal?

L: Yes, sometimes, and sometimes, since they have the kitchen at the church, sometimes we just take it to the church.

M: I see.

L: That's real enjoyable, too.

M: Did you get together very much with the people from Concob Church?

L: No, not very much because we have the same days for service.

M: I see.

L: That makes it kinda difficult.

M: Could you tell me a little bit about the history of Shady Grove Church? (pause) You have a document there, Mrs. Lenoir?

L: Beg your pardon?

M: You have a document on the history of the church there?

L: This is about it.

M: Could you read some of that into the microphone for me?

L: Well, where would you like for me to start at, the first beginning?

M: Yes, just tell me the important parts of it. Is this an article that you wrote for one of your church anniversaries?

L: Yes, so it was the anniversary of the church from 1885 to 1963. That's when this was wrote, in 1963.

Shady Grove's Anniversary from 1885 to 1963

This seed was sewn. It produced and began to bring forth fruit under the minister who was a shepherd at this time, Reverend Mitchell Adams. This church was called Shady Grove. I will name some of the officers of its official board: Bob Sherrod, Ned Hyde, Larkin Harris, and Colonel Brown. There stood some ministers: Jeff Daugherty, Anthony Brownrigg, and Elbert Coleman. They were closely associated to the church.

As builders, Rev. M. C. Adams was the builder of the first free church. Part of its walls still remain on the original spot. The first farm was three quarters of a mile away. This free church was built and completed. The stone was laid on the second Sunday in April, in 1902. And that night, the building was consumed with fire.

The second was raised, for the building is in this frame we still remain. All of this was under the administration of Rev. M. C. Adams, as pastor.

Rev. Monroe Round, Rev. Cornelius Williams, Rev. Tazell Ervin, Rev. John Sykes, Rev. Nat Lathan, Rev. A. B. Bradben, Rev. Henderson Chandler, Rev. Banks, Reverend Mr. McEachin, Rev. Joseph Pharaoh, Reverend Mr. Green, which all done a great work. Seventeen years ago came in time for our pastor now in Rev. Louis Vaughn who have done a great service and is still doing a greater service for the church.

M: Is he still your pastor?

L: No, he passed. Maybe it was in December or January, but not long ago. His health begin to fail so he pastored until year before last. Last year we had our first pastor since.

M: Where did folks go to church before you put your church up in 1885?

L: Well, they tell me that they had brush arbor. Of course, I didn't know about it because I didn't get here until 1904. (laughter)

M: What kind of structure was the brush arbor?

L: They say that they would cut poles with forks in them. They would then lay poles in these forks and go all the way across it laying poles that would hold brush. They would cut the brush and put it on top of it.

M: Now, did they put up a brush arbor just for revivals or did they use the brush arbor for church every Sunday?

L: Well, they said that was the only church they had until they were able to build a plank church.

M: You have some more things there about your church?

L: No.

M: Well, I'd like to thank you for this interview; I've appreciated it. You've given me a much clearer picture of life around here.

L: Well, you are welcome. I was glad to talk about anything that have a beautiful background.

M: Well, thanks a lot.

THTP - Oral History Interview OH 125
An interview with
Emmett Lenoir

conducted and edited by
Peggy Uland Anderson



Emmett Lenoir was born in the community of Vinton, Mississippi on February 7, 1902. He is the son of a schoolteacher and makes his living by farming. Since Mr. Lenoir lived in the Vinton community, his interview centers on the people and structures in the community. He provides detailed information on the community as he knew it. Schooling is another of the important topics in this interview. He describes daily school routine, the buildings that classes were held in, and gives historical details concerning the Concob and Town Creek schools.

The interview with Mr. Lenoir was conducted in his home by Peggy U. Anderson on February 19, 1980.

U: This is an interview with Emmett Lenoir for the Tombigbee Historic Townsites Project by Peggy Uland at Mr. Lenoir's home on February 19, 1980. His address is Route 2, Box 238, West Point, Mississippi 39773. His telephone number is 494-1506.

Mr. Lenoir, could you tell me when and where you were born?

L: I was born in this county, Clay County, in the Vinton community I would call it. They call that the Vinton or the Town Creek communities all around in there. That's where I was born and reared. I stayed in Clay County all my life. I was out of the county or the state, you might say, about six months, and that was to live in Gary, Indiana when I was young, before I married. All the rest of my life I spent in the county.

U: When were you born?

L: February 7, 1902.

U: So you've just had a birthday.

L: Had a birthday this past February 7.

U: Were you born at home?

L: Born at home, right in my father's house. Back in those days I guess everybody would be born at home. I was born and reared right down on a small farm that belonged to my father. I was reared there. Also, I went to school to my father. He taught in that community and I went to school with him. Also, when I married, I married out of his home. That's where I married.

U: What was your father's name?

L: A. D. Lenoir. His real name was Andrew Lenoir, but they call him regularly, A. D. Lenoir.

U: What was your mother's name?

L: My mother died when I was small. She died in 1910. Father married again with a lady by the name of Hattie Knighton. She was our stepmother; she was a good stepmother. She reared us, and we all loved her just as we loved our mother. I know she wasn't my mother, but we all loved her as such. She lived there. I don't know what year she died, but it was long about 1923, because I think she died the year I married. She died in about 1923. That's when I married, 1923.

U: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

- L: There were four brothers and one sister. There is five of us in all. We are all living today, all four of the brothers and one sister. She's still living. My sister lives in Canton, Illinois. Three of the brothers is here, and one of the brothers lives in Canton, Ohio. The rest of us are here. One of the brothers stayed in St. Louis quite a number of years, but he has been back here about five or six years, I guess. But the older brother, Andrew Lenoir, and I always stayed here. We didn't ever go anywhere. We reared our families here, and we are still here today. All the children are grown. My wife and I reared six children. All of them are living but one; one of the sons died. All the rest are living. Since they got married, I think we have about thirty-two grandchildren. It would take my wife to tell how many great-grandchildren, but I think it's eight or ten. (laughter) That's how many we have.
- U: Do you get to see most of them? Are a lot of them still around here?
- L: The boy is the baby, but the baby girl lives just above there. She and her family live there. Our one son built a home here also. He lives in Gary, Indiana. He plans to come home this spring. He has already begun to move. He built a home here. So, that will make me have two of them living on the same place when he gets here. We lived on that Vinton community until 1938 when we moved down here to this community and bought this farm. Our kids was all small and we finished rearing them here. We bought this farm from the government. We've been here ever since 1938. The rest of my life was over in the other community.
- U: Do you know where your father was born?
- L: My father was also born in the state, but he was born in Monroe County, far as I can remember. I always heard him say it was Monroe County. It is just the adjoining county above us. He moved to Clay County in the time he was teaching school. He moved from Monroe County into Clay County when he was a young man before he married. I think I heard him say my mother was his student. She went to school to him. They fell in love, and he married her. They was all young then. That's where he started his family. That's when he got married. I did have some of the writing about the years, but I couldn't tell by heart the year he got married. It was way back in the 1800s. He taught school for years in this county.
- U: Do you know where he taught?
- L: He taught at Town Creek School, and he taught in the Concob community. He taught in the Prairie community, that's up in the prairie, and at Crossroads, that's near Muldon community. He also taught just a little out of the county, in my lifetime. I think it was mostly summer school he taught in Ferris, Alabama. He went out there and taught. I think he taught about one or two sessions out there in Alabama. Then, he came back to the county. That was way up in his age. That's the only time I remember him working out of the county.

U: Did you ever go to school and have your dad teach you?

L: He was the only teacher I ever went to. He had an assistant teacher, but he was the principal there. That's the only teacher I went to. In that day, it was a rural school. Back in that day, you walked a long way to school. We only had four and five months a year in school. I completed the eighth grade. Eighth grade then was pretty far up. At that time in the county, there wasn't even a high school. We didn't even have one, especially for the black people. There wasn't a high school, just a grammar school. You would get that. If you were able, you could go out of the state somewhere to a college. There was some colleges in the state, but I don't know any that were for black people way back there. I know there wasn't any high school in our county, just grammar school.

U: What school did you go to?

L: Town Creek and Concob. I went to those two. During my school age, I went some years to Town Creek and then the school moved from Town Creek to Concob. I finished up in the Concob area.

U: Were they public schools?

L: They're public schools. As I say, months were short, about four months or five months. That's about as high as you'd get.

U: In the winter?

L: In the winter, that's right. It began about October and went on about four or five months, and then it's over with.

U: Could you describe what the school building was like, and what a normal day at school was like?

L: When I went to school, Town Creek was taught in the church building. There wasn't even a school building, just a church. The community allowed the teacher to teach in there, because they really didn't have a school. When it moved to the Concob community, they also used the church. They used the church for a school. That's just the way it was. That's the schoolhouse.

U: Did they do things different when it was the school? Did they move blackboards in?

L: That's right. It had blackboards in there. They had blackboards on the wall. You work your problems on the blackboard. In that day, to learn you how to write, the teacher would go to the blackboard and lay out a copy of what he wanted to write, and the students would all sit back with a tablet or a slate you call it. Had slates in those days. It was a hard thing, kind of a hard metal. With something like a crayon, you write on it. It makes it pretty. Some of them'd have slates, some of them would have tablets. You look at

that and write it. Sometimes we'd have contests in writing. He'd score them, you see. The one who'd do the best in writing, he would call on them in the class. Then you'd tell who was the best writer in the school, by who started to head on down.

It was real interesting to work a problem on the blackboard. Why, sometimes the teacher would call a student to go out there and work an example that was on the board. Sometimes it would be a long example and cover quite a bit of it. Everybody in the class could look at it, and then he would go through just how he had worked that problem. I would say the days were really interesting.

U: Did you have textbooks?

L: Had textbooks. Reading, history, arithmetic, geography, grammar. . . . That's about all. We had what were called writing books to learn how to write. Then we had history. At that time, instead of history, we called it United States history. It was a big thick book. Physiology, we had that book, and spelling. That's just about all the textbooks.

U: Did you have benches or desks?

L: Well, we didn't have any desks; we just used the benches. You just sit there. I said it was in the church, and you just used the benches. Didn't have no desks. The desk you had was just holding it in your lap. No, it's not like you have the desks now. It improved from that time. You'd sit there and use your lap and get your lessons.

U: Did your father teach all of the ages at the same time in the one room?

L: The assistant teacher would take mostly one side of the church, and he'd take one side. She'd take up to a certain grade in hers, and she'd teach on that side; he'd teach on his. It wasn't different rooms. It was the same room, but you just get as far as you can apart.

U: So they tried to divide the younger and the older children.

L: Right, that's true. The assistant teacher would take from the lower grade up to about the third, somewhere along in there. The principal would go on up higher.

U: About how many children were there?

L: Way back, it would be so many, probably seventy-five or eighty. In that day, there was a lots of people living in the rural community out there because people farmed. That church would be just about full. Anyway it was seventy or eighty, probably more than that sometimes. It would be a big load.

U: Did everyone walk? Did they come from far?

L: Some come five or six miles. The children come from the Vinton community where you're talking about and further on up from that and down here to Town Creek. You spoke about the Levi Hollins place; that's a little above the Vinton place. Those children all come to Town Creek. When we moved to Concob School, it wasn't right where it is at the present time. It was back up in the woods there. That made it about five or six miles to walk up there from where we lived.

U: Where was it back up in the woods?

L: It is up there in some woods. If you come back this way east a little bit from the church right on the corner what you call old Concob, there is a road that leads north up in there.

U: North from about where Crecy Gladney lives?

L: That's right. That road there leads right where that church sat. Her husband was a member of that church. The cemetery is there, and he was buried there. They just brought that church down the road from back up in there. At that particular time when the school was there, that was no road, just a path for the children to go through to school. The road I'm telling you about now is a rock road. We just had wagon roads, no gravel road. When you went places like church, they used just buggies and wagons. There wasn't any gravel roads in there in that day, just roads. When it rained, it'd be muddy and still we'd go to school.

U: Did most children go to school?

L: Most children went to school. There were just some few families that you'd find where children didn't go so regular. They'd go. You didn't find many that would be out of school. The old people mostly had them go to school. You wouldn't hardly find none lurking around; they put them in school. Terms were short and they'd have them to get those few four months.

U: Was it more common that younger kids went more often and sometimes the older kids would stay home and work?

L: All of them would go. School opened up in October. Well, sometimes late as that would open, a few children wouldn't quite be ready to go. They would have to kind of help harvest the crop. Probably would be the last of October before some would get in school. In that day on over in the last of February coming the first of March, people really got busy farming. Some few of the larger boys that had to farm would have to quit and go plowing. That would cut his school off a little bit. But all the rest, the girls and the smaller ones, would go on all terms. That was the only little thing. The older ones would help finish gathering their crops, and drop out to start plowing and start farming for another year. Other than that, most of the children would go to school.

Seemed to enjoy it. Had lots of fun. In that day, they didn't have the modern things to play with like now. You don't know anything about it. They would play ball, and sometimes they'd have what you call jumping rope, swinging and jumping. You go out in the woods and find lots of grapevines. They'd grow long. They'd strip one of those vines off and make what you call a jumping rope out of it. A bunch of kids would be out there just hollering and laughing, playing jumping rope. See who could jump it the fastest. I saw something like that on the television not long ago, and it made me just look at it because that was common where children would get those vines. Some of them would jump it so fast. So, these were the kind of things they'd play, ball, jump rope and all. They'd be having lots of fun.

U: Did you ever play marbles?

L: Played marbles. Little boys liked to play marbles, but they loved ball games. They loved to play ball as soon as they turn out for lunch. As soon as he'd get his lunch for what little time he had, he'd start playing ball.

U: Was it a homemade ball?

L: Lots was a homemade ball.

U: How do you do that?

L: Lots of ways you could get a ball. Sometimes you get a marble, and sometimes you could buy a little rubber ball about like a small birdie. You could get a stocking, or you could buy some twine. Some of them would just get old stockings. I don't think they make them like that now. You could kind of start it, and it would ravel all the way out. Well, they could take a stocking and ravel all that out and wind and wind that rubber ball and made a big-sized ball. When you get it, throw it up. It would be a good ball. (laughter) They made most of the balls at school. They really didn't buy any; they just made the balls. Make you a bat to bat the ball with. Go in the woods and cut a little piece of timber and make a bat with a handle on it. It wouldn't strike out fast.

U: Do you know where your dad was educated to become a teacher?

L: He was an educated man. In his day, he just got it. Some few black people got education. He had a good one. He had a good education. He was a real scholar. I wouldn't know the school. The school he worked in in his boyhood days was in Monroe County. He was a real mathematician. The white and black would just like to give him problems to work.

I remember the first time ever that I know he had one he couldn't work. He made one that bothered his brain a little. He'd go to sleep and take a little rest after he'd been in the school. He

could wake up clear. I'd have a problem sometime. He could lay in the bed and tell me to get my pencil. Now he really could do this. He would tell you to place such and such a figure this way, and such and such a figure this way. He said, "Now work it out." He'd tell me how to work it out. He'd work it out in his head and tell you. He could do it. He really could work mathematics. He was good.

My father's things got kind of scattered around after he died. He really made some arithmetics. He just took his pencil and made some books that were really problems. He sure did. They were real good. Some of his students that's living now went to him, and when he got through with them, they did know something. All of the community thought lots of him because he was very outstanding.

U: Did he farm?

L: He was a farmer. He raised us on a little farm he bought, seventy acres. He would teach and farm; that was his occupation.

U: Did he farm right where your house was?

L: Well, when he bought the farm, it was kind of in two plots, very much like mine now. There was ten acres up there right back of London Chapel where the home was and the barn. The sixty was kind of down in the bottom. You had to go across some more land to get to the other sixty. You would go across the same man's place that he bought it from. He bought from the Watsons. That's what you call the Cox place. It was called Cox's but the Watsons owned it. He bought it from the old man Watson. So the sixty acres was separate from the house. That's where we raised the cotton, corn, peas, watermelon and all this. That up around the house had a good orchard, and pasture where you pasture the cows.

U: What kind of soil was that?

L: Sandy soil. That's right. It's called sandy land, light sandy land. All that right round what you call Cox's is sandy land. The old Colbert place you talk about, it's sandy land. The Vinton place is sandy land. It's what you call the sandy land part.

U: We were talking about sandy land. Is that better to farm than prairie?

L: I wouldn't call it better; it's just a different kind of land, like anything else. Most farmers call the prairie land the best land. That's strong land. Call it the richest kind of land. Sandy land is just as productive as it is, but it's a different soil. You really can have what you call more truck crops. It will grow that better than prairie land. Prairie don't grow even watermelons too good. Sandy land will grow better peas. It will grow better fruit than on the prairie land. For something like corn, cotton and other grain like that, the prairie land is strong and rich. I'd

rather farm the sandy land because it is very suitable to most anything in a garden.

U: You said your dad had an orchard up by the house. What kind of fruit trees did he have?

L: Peach trees. My father had a good orchard. I used to enjoy that. I'd come out of the field and sometimes before getting home to eat dinner, I'd eat that fruit. I wouldn't hardly want dinner even. Had peaches, apples, pears, grapes, all that kind of fruit. He raised what is called a Japanese plum; they is big-sized, big old red plums. Then there was a common plum, and they had all that in there. He raised most all kinds of fruit from there. We'd enjoy eating it. We had a good orchard.

U: What did your house look like?

L: Very good house. The old house stayed there for years. It was kind of like this house with a hall between it. Later on, my father enclosed the hall and put a glass door in there. It was seal inside. It was straight up and down plank like that wood. It was kind of some of the best sealing that they made. It would be kind of cross-ways here.

U: Was it two big main rooms?

L: Two big main rooms. That was the first, and then we had an ell to it, plus the kitchen. We had three rooms, a kitchen, and a smoke-house. That was the pattern of an old house, two rooms or three rooms, a kitchen, and a smokehouse.

U: Was the kitchen attached or separate?

L: It was attached to the house. The ell part was there. The kitchen was built a little out from the ell, and a little porch run to the kitchen. That was the way it was built.

U: Did it have a loft?

L: Had a loft. It was sealed good overhead with the same sealing that was around there. Fact, it was a nice house.

U: Did he build it?

L: He had it built. I don't know the carpenter that built the first part of it, but the add on room was by a carpenter there by the name of Brooks Griffin. He put that on there. He mostly did this work.

U: Was that when you were little that he did that?

L: The first one was built out of. . . . I don't know who built it because I wasn't even born then. I never fooled around with who built this house I was born in.

U: Was the addition put on when you were little?

L: Yes, ma'am. This ell I was talking about was very little.

U: Did you use the front rooms for bedrooms?

L: Yes, ma'am. We used the front rooms for bedrooms. Had a bedroom in there and very nice furniture in there. Otherwise, it was mostly kind of reserved for the front room. My sister stayed in the front room.

U: Did it have fireplaces?

L: Had a fireplace in each room. There was one on each end of each spur, not in the middle like this house.

U: Was there one in the kitchen?

L: A flue was in the kitchen, a flue that was kind of swinging from the loft. It didn't come all the way from the ground. It would kind of swing with some irons on it. Wood stove up there in that flue. That's the way it was. It was made out of brick. That's where you'd bake the biscuits.

U: Do you know if anyone out in that community made brick, or where people bought brick?

L: Didn't know no one that made brick out in there. My father'd get them from West Point. That's what he told me. I never did know what company he bought them from. But anyway, he'd buy them from the city.

U: Do you remember a general store out there?

L: Store out there? I heard about the one at Vinton. It was just a little further than me; my other brother knows about it. It was a store there at one of the old houses there. You could go there. As I said to you, I heard it was also a post office. My brother said that in his time he knows it was one, because he used to go there. He's a little older than me. I was just about born I reckon or little bitty small. I don't know about it. He said they would go there and get the mail, he and my mother. He would go there with her. I asked him about it the other day. There is one brother between me and him, and then they come a little bit off. Andrew knows about the store. He used to go there and get the mail. I remember the store, but I don't remember the man that had that store or what his name was. We used to go down there at Christmas. At that time, they had little cap pistols. You could buy little things they call caps. Roll off and on and you could pop them. We'd go up there and buy those things. I remember when the store was there.

U: What other kind of things did they sell in the store?

L: There was candy and most of those small things.

U: Did they sell lots of food?

L: I don't know whether they had fruit. I don't think they sold nothing like. . . . I don't imagine. I wouldn't hardly remember. I know they had these little things for Christmas, like toys. Any little store up in there in that day they'd have some candy, but I don't know whether they had any foods in there or not.

U: Clothing?

L: No clothing, no ma'am.

U: Plates and dishes?

L: No, I don't think any plates, far as I can know. Only thing I can remember is when we'd get these little old cap pistols and use that. We'd buy a little candy. I don't think they sold any food. You had to go to town to get that. It was just a little country store for little things, maybe soap, something like that.

Along in that day, they had something called blueing. You could wash with that. Get that and shake in the water; it would turn the water blue. It's a little cup with little holes in it. They would shake it over the water. Shake it just like you shake salt. So much would get in there. Stir it up, blue your water, and rinse your clothes. They'd sell all little things like that.

U: Where was the store exactly?

L: At Vinton. It's right there. . . . Well now, the whole site's just about grown up. Two old houses there at Vinton was there then. One of them is there yet. It's kind of sitting behind those bushes. But this one, I guess, rotted down. You can't hardly see nothing.

U: Was it on the road?

L: It was right on the road. The one I'm talking about was right on the road.

U: Did it face the road? Did you go in it from the road?

L: The road is kind of west of it, but it kind of faced south. It faces south and then the road would kind of go down more on the end of it. If you was there, you'd see somebody coming down the road, but when the road get right there, it's kind of on the end of it.

U: Was it open around it, or were there trees?

L: It was open. It was an open place around it.

U: Was it one-story or two?

- L: It was a double house, kind of like mine. When I can remember, it was just two big rooms and the store was sitting kind of off from it. It was kind of opposite it. It wasn't just attached to the house. I think the little store was kind of opposite of it. It was probably kind of added to it; it was on one end. I can't get it just like it was. But it was a store to the house. I remember the two rooms the main house had.
- U: Did the person who ran the store live in the house?
- L: He lived in that house. I think the store was kind of not just in that room, but was kind of attached to it. Yeah, I don't know the man who run the store. It was a little further than me. I just remember that, but I don't know his name.
- U: Do you remember any other houses that were right there?
- L: One right across from it. It was another old house. Probably, it's still there. That house is still there.
- U: The other house is still there?
- L: That house is still there. Should be still there. When these later houses were built there, it was still there. There was a lady lived there by the name of Maudie Brooks. That house is still there. It's probably old and near rotten down, but it's still there.
- U: Where was it? Was it next to the store or north?
- L: It was just a little distant from the store. Oh, it was three or four hundred yards probably from the store.
- U: Which direction?
- L: East of that house. The last person I know who lived there was a lady by the name of Lucy Natchez.¹ She was a nurse to one of the Watsons. He was kind of a deformed man. She lived there with him in that house.
- U: In the same house that Maudie Brooks lived in?
- L: Same house. Well, Maudie Brooks got in there after them. She lived there until the death of both of them. Maudie Brooks just lived in there since then. She lived there with this man; he was kind of deformed. She lived there until they both died. Then Maudie Brooks moved in.
- U: Did you know if Lucy Natcher ever lived any place other than that house?

¹Also spelled Natcher, Nacher.

- L: When I knew her, she was living there. She lived there with this man. I was a small boy, when she lived there with him. That was way on back.
- U: Was there ever a house that was northeast of that general store?
- L: Anywhere?
- U: Not too far.
- L: You just want them on the same side of the road, not across the road?
- U: For right now, do you ever remember one being on the same side of the road?
- L: Two was on the same side of the road. Well, they was back south. Some of them was right in the area where some of those houses is now. Two old houses were there. Far as I can get that, one of them was like a small house with a drop shed to it, which was the kitchen part. That was the one.
- U: Who lived there?
- L: The last man I know who lived there was named Jim Moore. On down further, there was a family. They had a double house and a kitchen, also. His name was Sy Howard. He had a big size family. He stayed there. That was two on that side of the road. That made four I can remember on that side of the road. Of course, there was some on the other side, but on that side of the road where the store was there were four houses. There was two more I can remember.
- U: What was Sy Howard's house like?
- L: Well, it was kind of a double house. It was two rooms, and I think his kitchen was not joining his house. It was a little distant from his house.
- U: Where were those houses? Next to Peter Montgomery's?
- L: It was south of Peter Montgomery's house. The part that Peter Montgomery owns was where Sy Howard's house sat, just a little south of Peter's house. I think he owned nine or ten acres in there. It was on that spot of land. That was where Sy Howard lived. I think, just above Warddell Moore was where that other house sat.
- U: Do you remember any houses on that side north of the general store?
- L: North? No, I didn't know any north of the store. No, I don't remember any. No, I don't know any north of there. That was called Vinton, and on up I didn't know any.
- U: Did you ever hear of a Henry Wilson?

L: Henry Wilson? I know a Trannie Wilson, Dennis Wilson, and Tode Wilson. Those were brothers. Those were all the Wilsons I knew who lived there.

U: Did you know where Tode Wilson lived?

L: Tode Wilson lived straight on up from the Vinton place, right on up near the county line. I don't know as whether that takes in the Vinton place or not. I don't think it really do. I think you call it something else when you get on up in there. He lived on up above the Vinton place, way up there on the county line. That's where Tode Wilson lived. Levi Hollins lived up in there somewhere. He was in that area, but it wasn't, I don't think, called Vinton. Vinton don't go that far up. Don't take long before it change to some other kind of community.

U: Do you think that Levi Hollins lived up closer to where that road goes past Crecy Gladney's?

L: Well, after you pass Pete Montgomery's and get up there, you turn to your left. That's the road that turns to your left and goes back to Crecy Gladney's. Then one road keeps straight on north. Levi Hollins lived back up in there, past that turn left. He lived back up in there.

U: Toward the river?

L: Toward the river. That's right.

U: Do you know what Levi Hollins did for a living?

L: Well, I'd say farmed. In that day, that's all people might have had to do. Wasn't any public works. Maybe a little sawmill would come through and they would just work a little. Most people farmed land to make a living.

U: Do you remember any other houses on the other side of the road from the Vinton store? On the west side of the road?

L: On the west side of the road? Yes. Of course, that place goes a long ways back from that side of the road. But near the road, I know two more.

U: What are those?

L: One of those houses on that side of the road, man lived in it named Bill Moore. There was another house a little above that one right across from and just a little above Warddell and them. Jeff Daugherty stayed over there. That's about the only two I know over on that side of the road. Of course, some were way on over across the creek on that place, but that is not near those on the road.

U: Do you ever remember anyone living in that general store as a house?

L: That store at Vinton?

U: Yes.

L: Well, I think the store was kind of added to it. Anyway, I know the man that lived there. I don't know his first name. His name was Poss. We used to go there, and he'd sharpen crosscut saws. We'd take that up there and he'd sharpen saws. He could fix guns. He could do most other things. He was named Poss; he was a kind of old man, white fellow. He could sharpen a saw real good. Our crosscut saw would get dull. You take it up there and he could fix it. That's the earliest man I really knew. I thought on it the other day. That's the earliest man I knew lived there. We used to go up there and have our saw fixed. That was in the old store, but he didn't run the store. The man before him run the store. I just can remember my brother and them buying those cap pistols. I just can remember that. My older brother would know about it. He would even know about the mail they got there in the one part.

U: When you lived there, where did you get your mail?

L: Well, when I lived there, you could go right out there to that road by London Chapel where they get mail now. You put a mailbox out there on the road. People do the same now. When I grew up, you just went right out there to London Chapel from our house right in back of London Chapel to get our mail on the road. We had a mailbox there.

U: Did you ever know a Johnny Ferguson?

L: Well, I think the Poss was the earliest one to live in the house. The man I called Johnny Ferguson, I think was since Poss lived there. It was Johnny Ferguson. He's a farmer. But in talking with my brother, I remembered that this man called Poss was there before Johnny Ferguson. That was way on back. I can kind of remember in mind he lived there awhile. He was a farmer. He wasn't there very long, I think. He was a farmer; he lived in that house.

U: Do you know how long Maudie Brooks lived in the other house?

L: I don't know how many years, but quite awhile. I don't know how many years.

U: Could you describe that house?

L: That was kind of a large sized house. It was kind of a big-sized house. I think it was. . . . Maybe it was kind of small rooms inside because I think. . . . I'm not sure, but I think that was the old man Watson's home. It was a very nice house. It was a big-sized house. Big house, I'd call it. I don't know how many rooms. It was made with rooms all in it.

U: Did it have any outbuildings?

L: No outbuildings. I don't remember any outbuildings, not right there at that house.

U: Stables?

L: Stables? I can't remember a stables. Well, that was when I was small. I remember those two houses there. Both houses weren't far from the pasture that was from the Moore house. I know it had a pasture there, but I don't know about no barn. Probably it had one. Somebody could tell you about the barn. That's just about as far as I can go back with that.

U: Do you remember any houses down by the Bartons Ferry landing?

L: That old Colbert place?

U: Down by the landing, like on the bluff?

L: It was one house there. I was wondering if it was there now. It was a little house sit right up from the landing there.

U: On the left side of the landing?

L: On the left side of the road. You go right on down to the ferry, and the little house sat right before you get there at the left. Well, the one that operated the ferry would stay there. Tank Hampton was one of the ferryman that lived there. He'd stay there. Bear Hawkins lived there; he was a ferryman there. Fact, he was the ferryman there when I came over here. He was operating it.

U: What did the house look like?

L: Well, it was just a little small house, just a little shack-like house. It was merely for the ferryman to stay there. It was an oblong house, a shotgun like. I think it had two rooms to it, but it was all built together one right behind the other. That's as far as I can get. Had a porch, too. It sat right up there on the bank of the river.

U: Was it built up off the ground?

L: It was kind of up off the ground. All I can remember is that it was not too high. Right where it was, when you'd have high water, it never did bother it. It was high on this side. The water would be back in there. He'd be down there unless it was a mighty high water. It would be all up in the sloughs near it, but it could sit there. Didn't hardly run him out unless it was a real big water.

U: Was it log or plank?

L: It was plank.

U: Did it have a porch?

L: A little shotgun porch. Mind you it was a small porch. Wasn't nothing like that large one. It was just a little porch right out your front door. You could walk out on it. It was merely built there for the fellows that tended to the ferry.

U: Did Trannie Wilson ever live down there?

L: Trannie Wilson lived up on the. . . . From the little house right down there on the river, you come back this way to right up on top of that high hill. That was a big house there. Far as I can remember, it was just two big rooms and a big hallway through it. Trannie Wilson lived there. That's the earliest man I knew lived there. That house set there for years.

U: Was that a dogtrot?

L: It was two big rooms and a hallway through it. Stayed open, I guess. You come in the hallway, and you go in that room or you go in that room. You could go plumb through if you wanted to. That's the way lots of houses were built then, with a wide hallway through. You go on through or you go in each room. It's a passageway through. That was kind of the style in that day.

U: Was that house log or plank?

L: It was plank.

U: That was plank, too?

L: Sure was plank. Don't know of any of them that was log hardly. There were very few log houses that I know of.

U: Was it up off the ground?

L: It was up off the ground. I'm not sure whether it was brick pillars or wooden pillars. At that time, some of the houses were on wooden pillars. It could have been, but anyway it was up off the ground. Yes, it was up off the ground.

U: Did you ever know anybody else that lived in that house?

L: No, I don't think I ever really knew anyone that lived in that house. This man lived there way years ago. I'd see him constantly coming down the road. Occasionally when we were small, we'd go down there. They'd all say he lived in that house. I knew he lived there. That was way on back.

U: Was there ever a two-story house down there?

L: Never know a two-story house. All this was one-story.

U: How long has London Chapel Church been there?

- L: London Chapel was first. . . . We just built us a new church there and had a dedication. The first church was built in 1901. This is about the third one built there. I don't know who built the first one, but I know myself it was there. The next one that was built we removed for this one. I worked on it some, kind of helped around doing a little something. I wasn't no carpenter, but kind of helped the carpenters around there. I kind of laid a hand to that. I helped build this one. The first was along in my father's day when they first got married. This was the church they built, old London.
- U: Did you ever hear of a warehouse building or any building south of the ferry landing?
- L: Never did know that. Fact, just some houses was all I knew, as far as in my lifetime. That's on the old Colbert place you mean?
- U: Just right there, just a little bit south of the ferry landing.
- L: No warehouse I knew of. That little store at Vinton, that's all I know about.
- U: Did you know Cal Phillips?
- L: Cal Phillips, yes. That wasn't really the Colbert place. The owner in my day of this place Cal Phillips bought was named Atkin. He built on there, and he had a family there. His family was. . . . I can't remember it was so long ago, when I was growing up. I think his name was Mabry Atkins. He was a white fellow. He owned that right in there. The old Colbert place joined that place on the east. Where Cal Phillips lived was between the old Colbert place and the Cox place. I don't know whether it come off the Cox place years back or not, but anyway it joined that. That old Colbert place joined it on the east. He was between the Colbert place and the Cox place. The owner of that in my day was a man named Mabry Atkins. Cal Phillips just bought it way up later.
- U: Do you remember what the Atkins house looked like?
- L: I want to be positive. I believe one of the rooms was made out of logs. I'm not positive now. People just could skin logs and hew them. I can remember one of them was like that. I'm not positive, but anyway it was just kind of like the houses I'm telling you about. It was a house with a hall through it, too. It was two rooms.
- U: Did he have any shed rooms or side rooms?
- L: On the south he had kind of a little room. I'm not sure. I don't know whether Cal Phillips put that there or not, but I think he had that on there too. I think he had a south room. It faced the road, and I think on the south side was a room.

U: Did you know Joe Harris?

L: Joe Harris?

U: Yes.

L: Joe Harris lived in that Cal Phillips house awhile.

U: Oh, he did?

L: Sure did. He lived there some.

U: Before Cal Phillips, but after Atkins?

L: It was before Cal Phillips.

U: In the same Atkins house?

L: Same house.

U: What did he do for a living?

L: I don't know, ma'am. I think he run the ferry some. But other than that, he would just, I reckon, make garden things grow. He kind of lived at home. He fished right smart.

U: Oh, he fished?

L: Yes. I just remember him. He kind of lived by himself.

U: Didn't have any children?

L: He had a son. Wait a minute, I think he had a son and a couple of daughters. I'm not positive, but I know he had a son. I think a daughter. He lived in that house. He operated the ferry. I don't know how many years, but he operated that ferry. Now that's some of the work he did.

U: Did you ever hear of the old Uithoven home?

L: Who ma'am?

U: Dr. Uithoven?

L: Yes. He's down there on the river. It's right across the road from the old Colbert place. It's on the north side of the road. It's still there. I think his son is still there now.

U: How do you get to that house?

L: Well, I ain't been back in there for so long, but after you leave Pinkie Shirley's, you go on down there and it's to the left. There ought to be a road leads back in there.

U: Yes, there is a dirt road.

L: Should be a dirt road. I don't know. I haven't been there in so many years. Of course, I don't know whether they opened it up and put a rock road in there. Probably they have because his son is still there. I believe Eldridge is his name; he's down there.

U: Do you remember what that house looked like?

L: Just how it was built, I don't know. It was kind of a large house sitting back there on the hill. That's called the old homeplace there. It's a big-sized house, I wouldn't know how it was built. It was a big old house. I guess it's still there; anyway, they still own that place.

U: Do you remember any other houses up in there by that one?

L: There was one more house I remember kind of back in there from. . . . It was kind of an old house. Man lived in it by the name of Frank Andrews. He was there years ago, way on back there. He was near that place. It was back in there on that same side of the Barton Ferry Road. It grew up in there. That's the house that I remember back in there. He was named Frank Andrews.

U: Which direction was it from the Uithoven house?

L: Kind of west, west of the Uithoven house.

U: Was it very far?

L: Not very far.

U: On a ridge?

L: Kind of on a ridge. All of that is kind of high back there.

U: Do you remember what his place looked like?

L: Same kind of land, but it was just a common house. I can't hardly get his house, but I know he lived there. He raised a lot of vegetables, and potatoes. He'd have chickens. My stepmother used to go down there sometimes and buy eggs from him. He was a good potato raiser. She would get some potatoes from him sometimes. He'd raise a lot of that. He kept eggs most of the time. That's about the only extra house I know up there.

U: If you went on up that road that went to the Uithoven place and you went right on up to the bluff along the river there, were there any houses along that bluff?

L: No, I don't remember no houses. It won't be long getting to that bluff when you turn off there to the Uithovens. You get to the chicket and go down a little and come right up another big bluff and

that Uithoven house sits right up on that big bluff. The Frank Andrews house was just west of that back in the. . . I wouldn't know whether I could find it now. I just knew it when I was young.

U: When you lived out there, were there blacksmiths or someone who did smithing?

L: No ma'am, no blacksmith. Dr. Uithoven was a doctor. You could get medicine from him. He'd doctor on the animals. He was a foreigner. We called him Dr. Uithoven. You'd go up there, and he'd give you some medicine.

U: Yeah?

L: Sure. Sometimes people would have some kind of sickness among their livestock. You'd go to him and he could help you out along that line. He was very good. We called him Dr. Uithoven.

U: Did people shoe their own horses?

L: There wasn't any blacksmiths out in that area, not in my day. You'd go somewhere and get your blacksmithing done in a town in my day. Of course, later on we had one over this way in this Waverly community. They used to carry them up here to have them shod. Most of the time I'd have mine shod. Right out in that community over there, I never knew any blacksmith shops. Could have been one years on back.

U: Do you know a Selvin Lenoir?

L: Selvin? I know Selvin Lenoir; that's my grandfather.

U: Yes?

L: Selvin Lenoir was my grandfather.

U: Did he live there where you did?

L: Well, some of his life he lived there on my father's place. He had a house there. That was in my boyhood. He lived on that place. Of course, there was a house just below my father's house that he built there. He let him build on there. All the time we lived there we called it Grandpa's house. That's where Selvin Lenoir lived. I remember sometime way back, he lived a few years in a house going toward Town Creek there. I don't know who he was living with. My grandfather married a woman by the name of Emma, Emma Lenoir. He had two daughters by her, and they were reared right in there where my father was living. I remember they lived down the road awhile. I was small. They mostly was living up there where my father was.

U: Did he move here when your dad moved here?

L: I don't know whether Grandpa come with my dad or not. When I knew

anything, he was there. (laughter) I'm thinking both come from Monroe County down into here. Probably my father was the first. After he came down here and was teaching school in this county and married, I think Grandpa would come down here with him then. They came from Monroe County.

U: Did you ever know a Larry Keaton?

L: Yeah, I know Larry Keaton. Larry Keaton lived on the Cox place. He had a house not too far from where we lived. He lived over on the Cox place. He had one son and one daughter. I think the daughter was named Betty, and the son was named Flim. They grew up in that community.

U: Did you ever know a Jesse Dukeminier?

L: I knew Jesse Dukeminier. When I knew Jesse Dukeminier, there were several of those Dukeminiers: Sid Dukeminier, Jesse Dukeminier, and Emmett Dukeminier. In my day, they lived at Strongs Station. I never knew any of them to live in there. This is just hearing about it. There was a place over there just west of London Chapel they always called the Dukeminier place. I think some of their ancestors way back owned that place.

U: Who owned that when you lived there?

L: Let's see. Well, the first one I know I can remember living there was a Shirley. He was there way back awhile; he lived there. Later on a man named Zack Ellis lived there most of when we were growing up. We were boys. He kept that for years. It changed hands since we left there. Zack Ellis stayed there for years; that was when I was very young. I don't remember when he come there, but I remember this man called Shirley lived there before then. We would always call it the Dukeminier place. I don't know just who owns it; it changed hands since my day.

U: Did Zack Ellis farm?

L: He's a farmer. He had quite a few hands on his place.

U: Did he have a store?

L: He had a store. Just as you pass the house coming north toward the corner, it sit right there on the road. There was a store there. Yeah, I bought lots from him.

U: What kind of things did he have in his store?

L: He had pretty good in his store. He didn't have dry goods or anything like that. He had sugar, coffee, candy, any little small thing. He used to keep gun shells. I used to always like go there to buy gun shells to go hunting. He had right smart in his little country store, but no clothes or nothing like that.

U: Pots and pans?

L: No pots and pans. He had just something like foods and like that to eat.

U: Did you ever hear of a place called March Hill?

L: March Hill? Yes, ma'am. That's on this side of the creek.

U: Of Town Creek?

L: That's right. The part of the place we owned in the bottom was not very far from the March Hill. The March Hill is right across from the back of this little home we owned, but it was across the creek. There is a creek come through and divide us from the March Hill. There is a man up here called Ruben Moore. He bought that March Hill. He lived on this south side of the creek. March Hill is on this side of Town Creek. You know where Town Creek bridge is. Well, it's on this side of the creek. That creek goes on back in there and joins Tombigbee. March Hill is not on the same side as we were.

U: On the south side?

L: On the south side of the creek. There is a place called March Hill.

U: Is it a community or just a hill?

L: It's just a big old hill. I've never known anybody to live on it. It's just an old hill over there. You come right off down it in the creek. It was the tallest hill I saw in Clay County. It's kind of something to look at. I used to watch that old hill. Looked kind of like a mountain over there. In my boyhood, I heard that people used to live there, but I have no dreams of who it was. Even just to hear about it. . . . They said in that day Indians used to live there on the place we bought back in there, but I don't know. That's just hearsay. You could see some signs like where people would live. You would see lots of rocks Indians would use. We used to pick them up back down in that bottom. They said Indians used to live down in there. Far as in my day, you used to hear that Indians was all through the country. They just lived in spots, and where they lived you could see some signs, especially on those sharp rocks they'd have. We could see something like flowers and things that just grow up from year to year in some spots around there.

U: Like old house sites?

L: It seemed like it was old house seats. That's down in there not far from March Hill, but it's on the other side. In my day, it wasn't nothing but farming in there where I'm talking about. People used to say the Indians used to be in there, but I guess that was way on back.

U: These places where you'd see old flowers, were they on your dad's farm?

L: Not exactly. The place that joined our place belonged to Alf Ross. He comes from this side of the creek and runs over there; we joined this way. Right across the line, it was two big walnut trees there and around those trees you could see something like those old flowers grow. One was a big walnut tree and one was not as big. I guess they could be there yet. When I left from over there, those trees. . . . This is where I remember you could see those different kinds of flowers in the spring. Looked like sometime someone could have stayed there. I don't know about it.

U: Did you ever see anything like that down along the Willis Branch or the Hutchinson Branch?

L: No, the Willis Branch is just a branch down there; we used to fish in there a whole lot and hunt in there. It didn't look like no sign of houses ever there.

U: Did you ever find any old wells while you were hunting?

L: Never did find no wells. I don't remember ever finding an old well. Lots of the time way on back, people had old cistern wells. But over in there, I never did run up on those kind. We didn't run up on no cistern well. Most of them over there in my lifetime didn't even have pumps. We'd have what you call overflowing wells. You bore a well and that stream would just stay out there. My father bored one and it stayed there. On the Cox place just below us, there was one there for years and years. It was just a big stream of water. Most all the neighbors around would bore one. The water would just flow out and waste. On and on as the years come, this water cut down for some reason. You always had to put pumps on them. Now I don't ever see one of those kind of wells. The water dropped. I know it did. But in my day, you'd bore a well, and there wasn't no pump on it. It just continues to run on and on year in and year out. You'd go there and get your bucket and just hold it under there and catch your water. I was reared up with one. My father dug one when I was young. When I left from over there, that well was running. But after I came down here, I guess the water dropped. They put a pump on it. When I came from over there, Pinkie Shirley and them right below there had one; the water was running a big stream just like your arm. It went down. They went down for some reason. They all said the water pans dropped; that must have been some of it.

U: What is a cistern well?

L: When you find one, it's a deep hole. People dig them with shovels and things like that. The water won't be too deep. They just dig down with spades and shovels. This just holds water like a ditch or something. It springs up and keeps it fresh. Then you wall it in. To keep somebody from walking off in there, you wall it up about

this high. They'd swing a bucket up over there with a little block and tackle, and let the bucket down in there. Get the water and draw it up.

U: What do you wall it up with?

L: Plank. That's right.

U: Have you ever seen one walled with brick?

L: Not all the way around. In that day, I don't think they walled any of them in brick. They'd wall them down so deep with plank. Plank was good in those days; it would last for years. My wife could tell you a little more about those kind. I never did use one, but where she was reared they had one. They used one. They would dig them with shovels and spades. After it would get to running, you'd cover it up. You go back and swing that bucket and let it down in there. When it gets full of water, draw it back up. That's a cistern well.

U: Did you ever know a man named Summer Moore?

L: Yeah, I know Summer Moore. He stayed at the Vinton community for awhile. It was before I moved from over there. He wasn't really in that community when I was growing up. I think he was way up in the prairie somewhere. He came down in there after I got married. He lived up there in the Vinton place. He lived around there, but you might say that in my growing up days, he wasn't in that community.

U: Did you ever know anybody whose last name was Trotter?

L: Yes. I know a man named Dick Trotter. When I remember him, he lived on the Vinton place, but not near the road. It was way on over on the west part across the creek over there. I remember him.

U: Like if you were going up to Concob?

L: You go around to Vinton and go around toward Concob. When you get way on around, before you get to Crecy Gladney's, there is a road comes back this way to your left. Now you come on down there, and there used to be houses. When you come to your left, that's the road back from which was the Vinton place plumb on back all the way through to the Vinton Road. Some of the road came on back to Town Creek. People lived all in that area down through there. This Trotter man lived in there on that road. His children went to school with my father and me when he taught at Town Creek. They went there. They lived in there on that road on the old Vinton place way over on that west side.

U: Do you know Albert Thomas?

L: Al Thomas you call him. I went to school with Albert.

U: Is that road out where he lives now?

L: Albert lives over there near Concob.

U: Is that where you mean?

L: The road I'm talking about?

U: Yes.

L: No, ma'am. That's all the way on around. When you go on around through Vinton and you get to that corner, you turn west. When you get way on down there, there's another road that turns south and comes straight back this way. In my day, you call it the old Throcks² place. When you come on through the old Throcks place, you come right on back to the Vinton place, because the old Vinton place extends way on over. The road comes back to the Vinton place way on the west. This is where the Trotter lived on the back of the old Trotter place back in there on the road.

U: After you get to that road that goes south, if you kept going would you cross the little creek?

L: Yes, ma'am. A little creek. Dry Creek. A little before you get to that turn, there is a little creek there. You cross a bridge there. At the time you cross the bridge, that road goes right back to your left. If you don't turn, that road goes on around and you go on by Crecy Gladney's and on to Albert Thomas's way up there on the road.

U: Was there ever a store up in there?

L: There used to be a little store up in there when my father taught school. There was two stores up in there in the Concob community. Forrest Cox had a store, and Frank Mordan had a store in that community. They had little stores in the Concob community.

U: You said you trapped. What kind of traps did you use and what did you get?

L: (laughter) Well, back in my younger days before I got married, fur was pretty good in that day. You have what you call a double spring steel trap. You set those traps on the animals trails, such as coon, minks, possums, and you'd catch him. You'd outsmart him and you'd catch him. When we were young, two of my brothers and I, would make a little money in the fall of the year. You'd trap right smart. Make pretty good money off of fur.

U: Who would you sell the pelts to?

L: At that time, it was in the paper you would pick up. It would advertise companies that would buy fur. A big portion of those companies would be in St. Louis. Some was in other places, but

²Also spelled Schrock.

St. Louis would send out several companies. They would send price lists out with what they were giving for them. All you'd have to do was bundle them up and ship them. We shipped most of ours to St. Louis. Occasionally, a fellow come through just peddling and would want to buy from you. You'd sell them. But most of the time we'd ship them.

U: Did you make fences out of boards, or did you ever plant shrubs or trees to make fences?

L: Fences then were mostly wire fences. I think mostly in that day, if you wanted to fence your yard in, you would rive out some palings. My grandfather could timber real good. He had a thing you call a froe. He'd get this good timber; he'd buy him a tree and he'd make what you call a horse. He could rive the prettiest palings. In that day, you would go by a person's place who really would put a fence up neat with those palings all even at the top. They'd run it real straight. It was beautiful. That's how it looked.

U: What kind of wood did he use?

L: Oak wood mostly. You could make them out of oak. My grandfather rived them out of oak or pine. Pine makes a pretty paling. Pine makes a real petty paling. Then this is what you use when you make your garden. All gardens in that day were made out of palings. Those oak palings would stand up there. They'd get sound, and they'd last a long time. As I say, you'd think you had a nice yard then. It was nice. Of course, it was different then. Now you have to get pretty wire, but people then just went into the woods. He done his thing.

U: When you put up wire fences did you use bodock any?

L: Used bodock for posts. We used very little bodock in our day over there in the sandy land. They do grow in sandy land, lots of them. Mostly we used cedar posts, white oak, or post oak. Those two oaks make good posts. Cedar, that's a good post, and mulberry. Those are most of the posts we would use. They were nice to get out. You could split them out good. The cedar post was a good, pretty post. Mulberry makes a pretty post and lasts long. People do use a lot of the bodock posts. They will last longer than most all of them did. They are a long-life post. In our day where we worked around there, we used cedar, mulberry, and post oak posts, occasionally a bodock.

U: Was your fenced-in yard grass or was it a dirt yard?

L: It was a dirt yard. Yes, ma'am. You'd fence it in. You'd have a yard. Had flowers in the yard. When I think about it, I guess way on back they didn't have a good little yard like you got now with clucking going on all over. Sometimes to keep the grass around there, you worked with the hoes. Sometimes you'd keep the grass cut, and mostly have flowers instead of a lawn. It's a change over. We have a lawn now to save your house and everything, but way

back some of them just chopped their grass out and worked those flowers. You'd have the yard pretty well covered with beds of flowers. They wanted to keep the grass out of the flowers then, but now you mostly grow lawns with flowers in it. That's a job for when you get through in the field. If the grass is a little tall in the yard, and to get the flowers looking nice, you would jump on out there. The family would get out there and clean the yard out. Work the flowers until they was clean. Of course, you have a walk made out of brick that would go up through your gate something like that. The other part of the yard was clean, just flowers. That's the way most of them was.

U: You said your dad had a smokehouse. Did he keep anything in that smokehouse besides meat?

L: Well, people made molasses in that day. Whether you had a barrel or whether you'd have it in gallon buckets, we would have a place in there where you'd keep your molasses. You'd hang your meat up there after you salt it. You smoke it, and get it cured.

U: But you salt it first?

L: Salt it first. Put it in the salt, take it and wash the salt off, and hang it in there and smoke it with something like hickory. It would be so pretty and nice. That's the way you cured it. I think some do that yet, smoke with those hickory. On and on, you could buy what you call liquid smoke. I'd do that a lot. You take it up and wash it off and paint it with this stuff. It makes it look the same color. You just put a smoke under the meat with hickory wood, and it would be so sweet and nice. Gives it a good taste. So you'd find meat and molasses, and things like that in your smokehouse. That's mostly what your smokehouse is for.

U: How was the smokehouse built?

L: The one we had was just a one-room thing. In my day, it was just a smokehouse building with not even a wood floor in it. Mostly when you're smoking, you're cautious about catching fire. The smokehouse wouldn't hardly have a wood floor in it. Most of them didn't; some might have. It had a dirt floor in there. You could hang meat up in there, and then you'd smoke your meat.

U: Did it have a pit dug to put the wood in?

L: No, we just kept something like a pot. You'd keep your fire safe and build your smoking in it and start it rolling. You didn't dig a pit for it; you just get something like a pot or a big old tub, something like that. That's for the safety of your fire. This is the way you smoke your meat.

U: Like a cast iron tub?

L: Well, mostly it would be a pot or old bucket of dirt. You have to

keep it from flaming out. You'd fix it where it would just smoke. Smother it all the time. If it would blaze out, it would be real hot. You keep it smothered just to smoke all the time. An old bucket or anything would make a smoke.

U: Did your mother ever can fruit?

L: My stepmother used to can fruit. When I was growing up, my mother would can lots of fruit, especially peaches. At that time, they'd put them up in jars. She'd can peaches and preserve peaches, pears and preserve pears. She put up all kinds of fruit including apples, some sweet and some fresh. Make pies out of them. Some of them would be ready to eat for biscuits. My stepmother would do lots of that. We had a large orchard. She would just work hard and put up lots of that for winter.

U: Berries?

L: Plenty of berries. Berries in that time would just grow all around in there anyplace, in the fields, around the orchard. You could go out anywhere and pick a lot of berries. You could raise strawberries, things like that.

U: In the garden?

L: We'd keep a good garden.

U: Did you raise strawberries in the garden?

L: I raised strawberries in the garden. I've been raising strawberries since I've been here. I think they had two hard winters. Last year, it just about killed them out. I have a bed of them every year out here. My wife puts them in the freezer and freezes them.

U: Where did they keep that canned fruit?

L: Well in that day, most houses had something like little pantries made in your kitchen. Make little shelves in the kitchen. They would stack them in there. Didn't have any freezer, just shelves. They would keep. In the wintertime, you keep a little fire around them. If it was freezing weather, sometimes they'd take them down and put them near the fire on real cold nights. But they hardly would freeze.

U: How did you keep things cold?

L: That's another problem. Didn't have no way. I wonder how we did it, but you didn't have any way to keep things cold. That's a question; you'll wonder how. In that day, there wasn't any way to keep things cold, like the refrigerators you have now. You didn't have any of that, but they kept it.

U: What would you do with milk?

L: Milk would keep long enough in the cool weather. You put milk in a jar to churn the milk; get the butter off the milk. The best way they had to keep what you call fresh buttermilk was in these kind of wells like I'm talking about. You'd have it in big jugs. They'd have troughs made at the wells, and you sit it in there to keep it good and fresh.

U: In the well?

L: In the well trough. It would just sit down in there. This would keep it cool. That's where my stepmother. . . . We had a well that run all the time with fresh water. It would run in the trough. Out on the other end, you had a trough where it kept it run off. So much would stay in this trough. They'd have a big jug or something that the water couldn't get in. They'd take it down there and sit it in there. This is the only thing that kept it cool; other than that you didn't have no way to keep it cool.

U: Was the trough made out of wood?

L: The trough was made out of wood, in that day. On and on and on, some people began to make cement troughs. But back there when I'm talking about, it was a wood trough. You take some big planks and just make you a good trough. It would last for years and years. This is the only way you have for keeping anything fresh. I reckon in that day if it wasn't fresh, you just drank it right on down. (laughter) I guess it's nice to go back there because things are so different now. The younger generation wonder, "How did you really do it?" It wasn't any problem in that day. I wonder sometimes how it really would keep that long, but it would. If you'd churn in the morning, you could put it in this water, and at night if you wanted some, you could get a glass full; it drank real good. Everybody looked well. (laughter)

U: What kind of dishes did your mother have at your house?

L: My mother had very nice dishes, not much different than what you have now. She had some nice dishes. When my father married her, she had her own dishes. She had some nice dishes, and my father and my family all had nice dishes. I don't know what kind they were.

U: Do you remember what they looked like?

L: Well, some of the plates were white, and some of them had rings around them. Some of the cups were just plain cups. Some of them would have a ring around the edge. They were a lot of nice dishes they had back there. They had some very nice dishes, and pitchers and things. You find some of the old pitchers now with spouts on them about that tall. Those kind look nice.

U: Did you have washstands with pitchers?

L: Yes, had some washstands with pitchers and bowls. We had a couple

of those big old pitchers and a big old round white bowl to sit it in. We had one of them when I was small. It was real pretty. Down through the years, I don't know what become of that. We grew up and got out. Different ones in the family have got them I guess. They sell those big old pitchers and old bowls to sit them in. The dishes was real good. Fact, if you dropped one of them, they wouldn't break fast. It was made out of good material.

U: Did you have any tin plates?

L: Had a few tin plates. I remember when I was real small, sometimes the parents would refer to a tin plate for a kid to keep him from breaking the plates. I remember me and my brother had one, I think. We loved it, because we knew it would fall and wouldn't break. They would buy pretty little tin plates to keep you from breaking them all the time, because children break them. We had a few of them. But we didn't use that many of them; they were to keep the kids from breaking them, that's all.

U: Did you have glass windows?

L: Had glass windows. Fact, we had a nice sealed house with windows. It had a closed hall with a front porch. We had a glass doorway in the hallway. It was a nice house. The plank outside was straight up and down. We didn't paint them much in that day. We used to use something called lime whitewash. It would make it look so pretty and it would last a long time.

U: How do you make that?

L: You get the lime and water and mix it up and make it kind of thick. Put it on the house, and it would sit there for several years. Didn't know about what you call paint. Used what you call whitewash. We would whitewash our barn gates, and barn and things and in the spring; it would look real nice.

U: What was the roof on the house made out of?

L: Shingles. The old house where we grew up had what you call bought wood shingles. You see it in the towns now. Some of those houses have wood shingles.

U: What kind of wood are they made out of?

L: In that day most of it was what you call cypress. Cypress shingles would last a long time. There is a few houses out there in West Point that got old wood shingles. They would last across the years. Make a pretty roof. They are about that long and thin at one end and kind of a little thick at the other. Make a smooth roof. The ones they use now ain't been in too many years. Companies went to making them. You could get those old wood shingles back in those days, and they were good. All the houses would have these. These are when you have a good roof.

There are some country houses that were just covered with boards. Rive them out like these palings. Rive them out real nice. They are about two feet long. When you go into West Point, that loaning place right there as you pass Fred's on the corner, has got those kind of boards on the front.

U: The Depositors Savings Association?

L: That's right. Right on the front they got these boards just for antiques, I reckon. People used to put that on houses. That's the kind of boards. Shingles and boards you call them.

U: Where did your father sell the cotton and crops that he raised on his farm?

L: West Point. They had buyers in the city that bought the cotton after you had it ginned. You took a sample there and the cotton buyers would buy it.

U: Where did you have it ginned?

L: You might have it ginned out there at the Wash Davis place. They got a store right across there now. Do you know where Mr. Shirley lives? Back to the right, there is the old Wash Davis place; there is a nice house to the left there, now. There was a gin house out there. I myself used to gin cotton there. If you didn't gin there, there was a couple in West Point, in the city. There is one right over across here in the Union Star community, and Mathis had a gin. We'd gin there sometimes, and the Davis sometimes, and sometimes we'd go to town. All the buyers were in town.

U: What would your father do with watermelons and truck crops?

L: In our day, we'd raise a lot of watermelons; we'd sell some and eat some. A big family would eat a lot of them.

U: Did you sell those truck crops in West Point?

L: In West Point. Sometimes the people in the rural area, like in the prairie where I said they don't raise many, would buy them from you. You hitched up the wagon in those days; you'd get a wagon load of watermelons and carry them to town. People would sell them.

U: You'd just sell them yourself?

L: Just sell them yourself. Just go around among the people and sell them. Sometimes a store would buy them from you. He'd take them and sell them.

U: Do you remember any of the stores that used to buy?

L: Not directly. I used to sell to some of the little stores out on the edge. Wash Davis had a store right there where this gin was,

and he'd buy some sometimes. He'd buy some sometimes and sell them to the people around. Sometimes you'd get up to town there and some little store had run out, and they'd buy all you had and sell them to people. Other than that, just go around and holler watermelon. (laughter)

U: Did you ever see any boats come up the Tombigbee River?

L: Yes. I did. I remember one year way back a boat come up there on Tombigbee, and they could hear it blow way down. It had a whistle. And I remember how we run to get down on the river to see that boat come through. Fact, that was just one time I seen that boat. Course, it made several trips down, not too many. That's all I remember coming down Tombigbee. I went down there, and that boat went through. It was a pretty big-sized boat. Some of them was out there cutting wood on the boat. They was laughing and talking, and it was just fun to me to see it run out there on the water. I was small. That's the only one I saw go down the Tombigbee.

U: How old do you think you were?

L: I was in my teens, just how much I don't know. Anyway, I was in my early teens.

U: What did it look like?

L: It just looked like a little house out there on the water, with a great big wheel turning behind it. It just looked good for me to look at, because I'd always seen skiffs. Seeing that with that big wheel turning was good. That thing would blow; it had a good whistle on it. It looked just like a little house out there in the water to me at that time.

U: Did it have freight stacked on it?

L: Didn't have much freight on it. It probably had some things on there, not too much. It wasn't too big, but it did have some things on it. What it was I don't know. I was just looking at it running. I didn't know what they had on it. I know they were cutting wood on there to heat or cook or something.

U: Do you know where it was going?

L: When I was looking at it, it was going up the river, probably I'd say to Aberdeen. That was the first town it would get to from where I lived. It might have gone up to Amory somewhere. Just where it was going to stop, I don't know. It probably could have been carrying something up to Aberdeen. But I know it run down the river several times.

U: Same boat?

L: Steamboat.

U: The same one came up and down a couple times?

L: I remember once, but they claim it come several times. I remember I went to see it one time, but I think it made a couple of trips down, probably more than that. I went especially because it would blow; it had a pretty whistle. I had to go from home down to the river, over a mile. I went to see it.

U: Did you ever hear of boats landing at either Barton or Vinton?

L: Never did hear of them landing. I don't really know whether they had a place to land a boat there. There was just a ferryboat at Barton, and Vinton didn't have anything like that. On this side of Vinton, there was just the river down there, but no place to land. I imagine if they had to land, it could have probably gone up to Aberdeen. It could have been running from town to town. It might have run from Columbus to Aberdeen. I don't remember any landing between here and there. I never did hear anybody say it.

U: Where is the old town of Colbert supposed to be?

L: The old town of Colbert?

U: Yes.

L: Well, it had to be on that old place there.

U: On the Cox place?

L: Just above the old Cox place. Did you say that part of the old Colbert place come from the old Cox place?

U: Yes, we think it might.

L: I know they join. I didn't ever know that.

U: Who owned that part north of there?

L: The old Cox place?

U: Yes.

L: Watson.

U: Watson owned the Cox place? Who owned the part that Colbert was on?

L: This is the place that I never did just know the owner. In my day, it was just an open place. I know where that house sit up there. This Trannie Wilson stayed there. But the old place wasn't really farming. It just grew up. We'd hunt in there for squirrels and rabbits and birds.

U: That's just south of the ferry landing?

- L: That's south of the ferry landing. Right.
- U: When you were living on your father's place and then when you farmed out there, did you or any of your neighbors ever turn up any kind of old plates or dishes in your fields?
- L: Never did turn up no kinds of dishes or plates in there. Sure didn't.
- U: Did you ever hear of anybody doing that?
- L: I farmed, but I never did turn up anything while I was farming out there. I don't remember turning up anything that looked like brick or something.
- U: Did you ever see any old brick chimney falls?
- L: Yeah. Some of the old houses, that I remember when I was growing up, went down, and I wouldn't doubt that you couldn't see some of it there now. There were a couple of houses way over there. My grandfather's wife stayed where that old house went down and there was sign of those old bricks. That would be the last thing you can see when a house really goes down. You'll always find a few of the old brick there. When I left from over there, there was a sign of some bricks around there.
- U: Did you ever see anything like that down on the Cox place?
- L: That's where this was, down on the Cox place. That's where I saw that, on the Cox place.
- U: Was that your grandfather's wife?
- L: That was my grandfather's wife. She lived there in this house that I'm talking about right now.
- U: Did she have a well there?
- L: Well, not exactly. The well there on the Cox place was a big old well that was fresh water. Most everybody on the place would go there to this well. It's not like it is now. Every house now has its well. Sometimes, some people had to tote water a good distance. Everybody would go to this well, get the water, tote it home. It was common to see a person going to the well getting water. That was one of your jobs, to go to the well and get some water and bring it home. That one well pretty well took care of the community. Everybody would get a bucket and go to the well and get some water.
- U: Do you know what her name was before she married your grandfather?
- L: I don't. I don't really know when they got married. I know they were married. He was married to the woman that was my father's

mother way on before I was born, and this one he married before I was born. I just knew them during my lifetime.

U: You said that several people lived around in the same area on the Cox place. Was there a main house?

L: A main house down there?

U: Yes. Were there several houses together?

L: It was kind of a quarter you call it. There were lots of houses on the Cox place. It did have a main house as you call it, I think, where old man Watson lived years back. Right there at that well, there is a big old house there. It was so long ago, I can't tell how it do look. It was a big house there where he stayed. Then the other houses that the laborers would stay in were on this place. There was a bunch of houses on this place.

U: Where is that on the Cox place? Of all that land that he owns right there, where is the house?

L: Well, across the road from Pinkie Shirley's, that's the Cox place. It comes plumb on back down here near the Town Creek bridge. The line of it comes back down and joins where the open land runs out there. That's where the Cox place is. The man who owned where them woods are lived on this side of the creek; he's Price Collins. He joined the old Cox place. The Cox place goes from way down there plumb back to the road where London Chapel is. That's a large place.

U: But where on that big place were the houses?

L: The houses was just east of the road way back. You could see them, but they were way over east of this road. It was kind of a quarter over there, around that well where the big house was. Then all around in different places is where the other houses would be.

U: Do you know anybody who lived down in there besides your grandfather's wife?

L: Yes ma'am, lots of them. There was Dave Mathis, his son L. C. Mathis, Larry Keaton, Bishop Paine, Olive Ford, and Chat Johnson. I'm going way on back, because Chat Johnson was there, when I was a little bitsy boy. These others were kind of on up in my teenage years. I called about a half a dozen already.

U: Would any of those people who lived out there still be alive or their children?

L: No, ma'am. I don't remember nobody. Most of those people are dead. I was talking with one of my brothers this morning, and those people who lived there in these houses I'm talking about are dead. Will Shirley didn't live exactly on the place. He lived where his wife lives now. He was right there in that day. He's not been too

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS TOMBIGBEE HISTORIC
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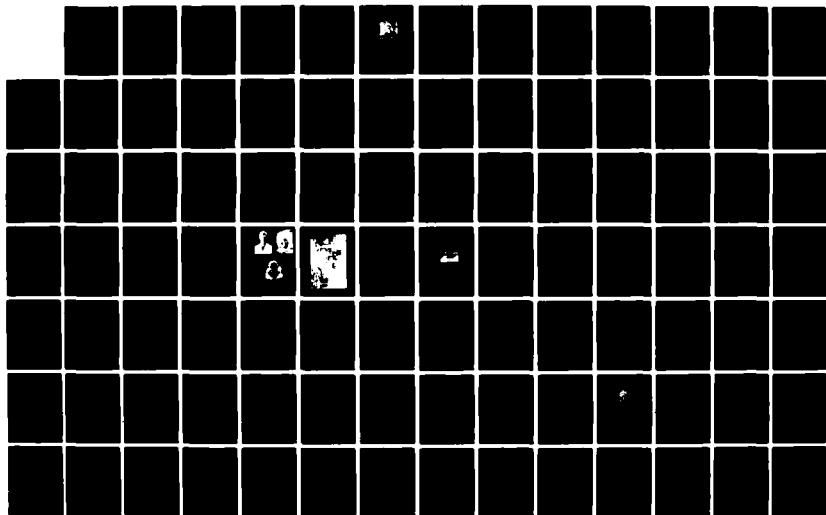
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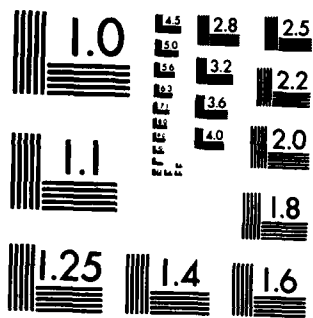
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MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS-1963-A

long dead. But on the Cox place all those people. . . . I'm trying to see if I know any of them. I don't believe I know any of them; all those people are dead. Way on back, I know they are all dead. These later ones are just about dead. There was a heap of them living in there. They are most all dead.

U: We're just trying to find somebody else to talk to.

L: There are two people I know you could talk to. One is Joseph Mitchell, and the other is my brother.

U: Your brother Andrew?

L: Brother Andrew is a little older than me. You ought to talk to him. I was telling you about the post office at Vinton. I asked him about that. I told him that I told you that I heard my father say there was one there. He said, "Well, I remember it because I used to go there with Mother." Now I couldn't tell you that. If I went there, I was too little to know. But he knows. He is a little older than me. There is one more, Joseph Mitchell. I don't know nobody else that lived in that area, other than another brother living in St. Louis. I was talking to him, too. He isn't quite as old as Andrew. If Andrew can't give it to you or Joseph Mitchell, this is all.

U: Where did Joseph Mitchell live?

L: Joseph Mitchell lives up here with his nephew. Do you remember passing this church, not this one right out here by the highway but the one on further around the road? When you pass that church, it's right up on the hill there. It's a road turns to your right. When you turn to your right, the first house is where Henry Mitchell lives. This is where Joseph Mitchell lives. He is old. If you could catch him alright. . . . Sometimes his mind ain't. . . . He's the oldest one; he's along with my sister. He is older than Andrew. My sister doesn't live here. These are the two oldest people. Willie Shirley, Andrew Lenoir and Joseph Mitchell are the oldest ones.

U: Where did Joseph Mitchell live out there?

L: Joseph Mitchell lived in the Town Creek . . . down there between Town Creek and London Chapel. His grandfather had a little place that sat right back there on the Ellis place, right northwest of London Chapel. He was raised there. He was a little closer to London Chapel than he was to Town Creek. Old man Henry Thomas, as he was called, had a little place there. Joe Mitchell was reared there. He was reared in that community. I don't know anymore. We are the only little pebbles left. (laughter) I don't know nary a one older than my brother and Joseph Mitchell. My other brother is a little older than me. He's next to Andrew. That's Nathaniel; he lives over there in Union Star. We are the only ones. That's four of us, Nathaniel Lenoir and Andrew Lenoir and Joseph Mitchell and I. I can't think of none living; they are all dead.

U: Well, thank you very much for everything you've told me today.

L: I did the best I could.

U: Well, you did very well.

L: You think that was very well?

U: Oh, yeah. Thank you very much for myself and the Project.

L: Yes, ma'am. Well, I guess it's necessary to go back and bring those things up to time.

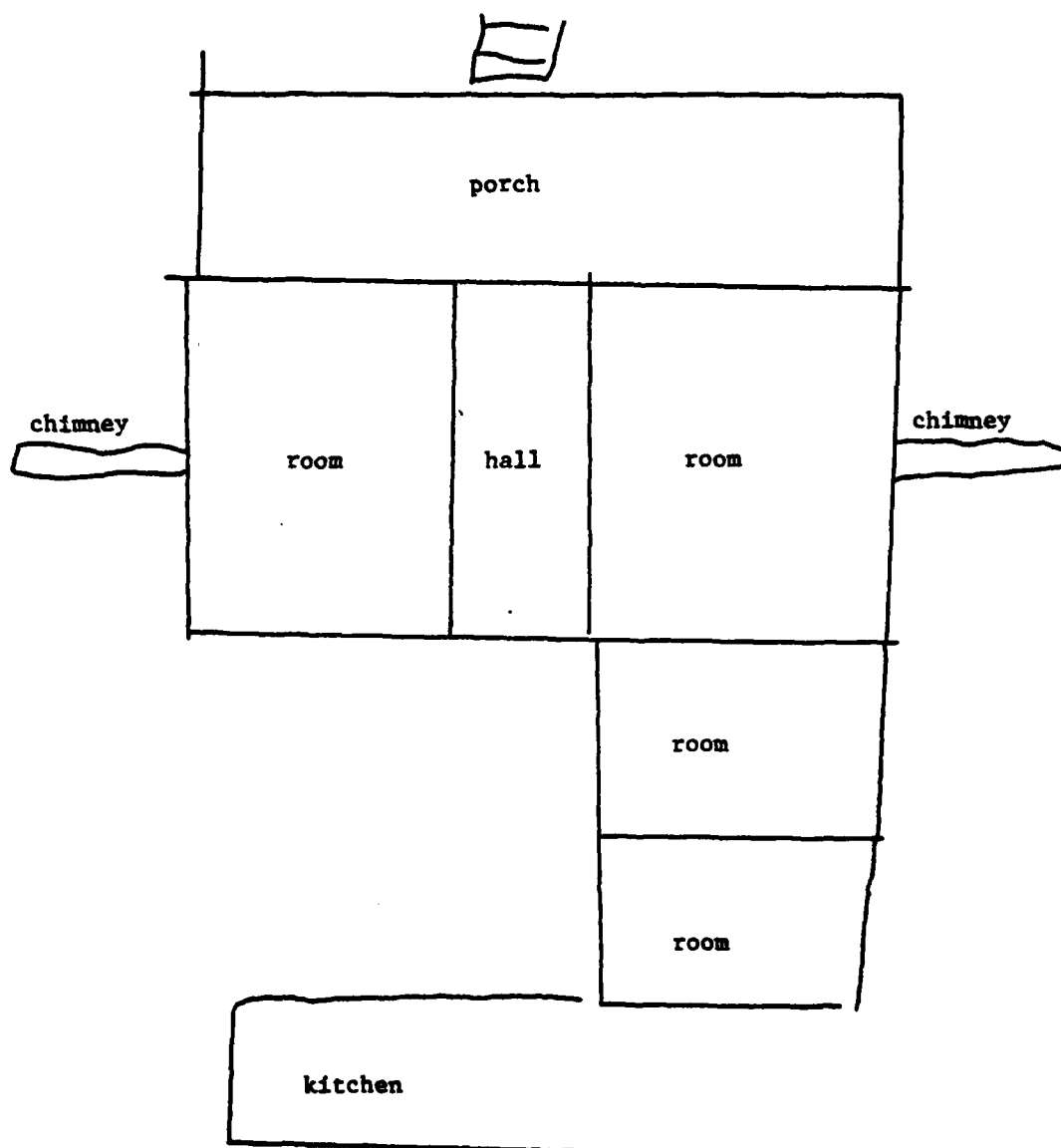


Figure 1. Floor plan of the Andrew Lenoir, Sr. house. Drawing by Emmett Lenoir.

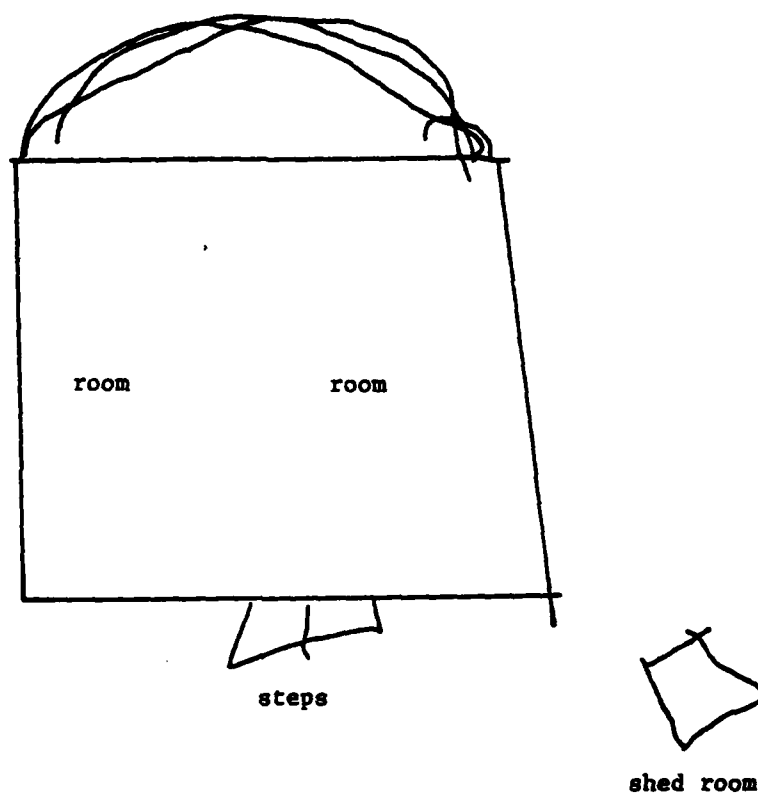


Figure 2. Front view of the Vinton general store. Drawing by Emmett Lenoir.

THTP - Oral History Interview OH 126
An interview with
Woodrow C. Dobson

conducted and edited by
James M. McClurken



Woodrow Dobson was born in the community of Vinton, Mississippi on November 4, 1914. Although he moved from the area two years after his birth, some of his earliest memories are of visiting his grandparents when they lived in the house which is now called Cedar Oaks. Much of this interview is a description of that house at the time that his grandparents lived there.

This interview with Mr. Dobson was conducted in his home by James McClurken on February 20, 1980.

M: This is an interview with Mr. Woodrow C. Dobson for the Tombigbee Historic Townsites Project by James M. McClurken. The interview is taking place in Mr. Dobson's home on February 20, 1980. His address is Route 2, Box 262, West Point, Mississippi 39773, and his telephone number is 494-6670.

Mr. Dobson, I would like to begin by asking when you were born?

D: November 4, 1914.

M: Were you born here?

D: Born in Clay County, sir.

M: Where specifically were you born?

D: At Barton Ferry.

M: Did you spend most of your life there?

D: No, I left there when I was two years old and then came back when I was sixteen.

M: Were your parents originally from Barton?

D: My mother was born close around there. I don't know if it was Monroe County or close around in that Barton vicinity. My father was born in Alabama. He had a sister who moved over to Barton Ferry.

M: What was your father's name?

D: James Henry Dobson.

M: What was his sister's name?

D: It was Alma Dobson Atkins. I guess that he was visiting or staying there with her, and that is where he met my mother.

M: Can you tell me a little bit more about your life?

D: Well, we've been poor all of our lives, farmed for a living, and did a little public work and things like that.

M: Were you a farmer all of your life?

D: Yes, sir.

M: How long have you farmed in this area?

D: Oh, since 1932.

M: Have you seen quite a few changes?

D: Yes, we've really seen changes; we've really seen changes.

M: Can you tell me what you remember from Barton Ferry? What did the place look like when you lived there?

D: We lived right there at the ferry.¹ Just hearing them talk about it would be the only thing. . . . There was a log house there that the guy who ran the ferry lived in. The little old barn was there for years, just kind of a corncrib with a shed on each side of it for the cows and mules.

M: Where did that sit?

D: Just barely north of the old ferry site, on the knoll; on top of that knoll, just north is where that sat.

M: Was that a log house?

D: Yes.

M: Can you describe the place for me?

D: It was a two-room, log house with a shed room on the back for the kitchen and dining room.

M: Did it have a central hall?

D: No sir, it did not; this one didn't.

M: This one didn't have the dogtrot?

D: No.

M: What side of the building was the side room on?

D: It was on the north side of the building.

M: Did the house sit east and west?

D: It was facing south so it would have been north and south, wouldn't it?

M: Did it have a porch?

D: No, sir.

M: Was it on pillars?

¹Mr. Dobson later stated that he was born in the house which he describes here.

D: Yeah, I am pretty sure that it was on wooden pillars.

M: How far was the corncrib from the house?

D: Approximately a hundred feet.

M: Was there one on either side of the house?

D: No, just one.

M: Was there any other kind of barn there?

D: No, that was the barn, the corncrib with a shed on each side.

M: Were there any other outbuildings?

D: No, not when I remember seeing it. I'm pretty sure, though, that at the time my parents were there, they had a chicken house because everybody did.

M: Did they have an outhouse?

D: I'm sure they did, but I don't really remember it.

M: Were there any other houses sitting up there on the bluff?

D: Not at that time; not that I would know anything about. Daddy showed me where buildings had been in times gone by. That was after we came back there, when I was sixteen.

M: Do you remember anyplace near that house that was in ruins back then?

D: There were some south of that road that goes down to where the ferry was.

M: On the bluff south of there?

D: There were some signs of some buildings that had been there.

M: What kind of signs did you look for?

D: Well, just some old pillars in the ground, a few old bricks, or maybe a few boards laying there.

M: Do you think that most of those buildings were frame structures?

D: Yes sir, I am sure that they were.

M: Did they have big trees in the yard?

D: There used to be several trees where this old cabin was, the house that the ferryman lived in. There was a mulberry tree there at one time; it was four feet across.

M: Do you remember a place that we called Cedar Oaks? I would imagine that Dr. Uithoven was living there.

D: When we came back here in 1930, he was there. Yes sir, I remember seeing the house and remember hearing my family talking about it before, but as far as for remembering it in detail, I don't. But I do remember the way it looked when we moved back there to Barton. At one time, my grandfather lived there.

M: At the log house?

D: At the Uithoven place.

M: What was your grandfather's name?

D: William Foote. That was my mother's daddy.

M: So he is an old-timer there.

D: Yes, he was; he really was.

M: Do you remember a place that is a white frame building with a big long porch on it?

D: No sir, I can't get that now.

M: I am curious about a Barton school. Did your daddy ever show you a building and say that it was used for one?

D: No, sir.

M: Did he ever talk about a Barton warehouse?

D: Yes.

M: What did he tell you about that place?

D: Not a whole lot. He had been there something like six or seven months, and the first steamship came up the river. He was the ferryman. He didn't know what to do about the cable so he raised it as high as he could. Well, there wasn't clearance. He was supposed to lower the cable, but he didn't know. The boat had to drift downstream while they told him what he'd have to do. Well, what he would have to do was lower the cable. They had to let the boat drift back downstream while he got the cable lowered. He did that manually with a hand winch, a hand winch. Well, it wasn't really a hand winch. It was a jack-like thing that held it. You'd pull it over and loosen a cog, and then you would let it back a cog. It would take a pretty good time to lower it and raise it.

M: Where was this cable fastened?

D: It was fastened to a tree on this side of the ferry, right out between the house and the river.

M: Between the log house?

D: Between the house that the ferryman lived in and the river.

M: Do you remember seeing anything left of that when you were sixteen?

D: Yes, they had redone it, anchored some concrete into the ground and fastened the ratchet onto that concrete to hold the cable.

M: What year would you say that was in?

D: It had been done by 1930, sometime between 1916 and 1930.

M: Did your dad ever tell you anything more about the warehouse?

D: Well, not a great deal. They hadn't used it while he was there, except, I think they probably did unload some stuff in there. I don't remember who he said it was for when that ship came up. That was the only ship that came up the river.

M: This would have been at the turn of the century?

D: 1913.

M: Do you remember the steamboat?

D: I don't; I really don't. I really hate it. I have racked my brains for that since Sunday, and called several people to see if I could find out. I can't.

M: You don't remember it coming up the river; you just heard about it.

D: Yes.

M: Can you describe the house that you lived in at Barton?

D: On this old Atkins place?

M: Yes.

D: Yes, my uncle and them moved there in about 1898, or 1899.

M: Who is your uncle?

D: Mabery Atkins. He married my daddy's sister, Alma Dobson Atkins. It was a log house with a hall in between it. The two log rooms were pretty good sized, about 16'x 18', or something like that, with a chimney on one end.

M: What end?

D: On the east end of the house. It was on rock pillars, sandrock pillars. Do you know what a sandrock is?

M: No.

D: Well, it is a kind of rusty looking rock. It's hard, but you can flick it apart and there is a kind of coarse sandy stuff in the rock.

M: Was that mined around here?

D: I have never seen any in this vicinity of Mississippi.

M: Where was the side room on this house?

D: There were two side rooms on the south side of the house.

M: The house faced the Barton Ferry Road?

D: Yes, sir.

M: Where were the windows?

D: They were on the ends of the house, and there was one on the north side of the house, in the room with the chimney. The house was on the south side of Barton Ferry Road facing north and south. The east end of the house was the one with the chimney. It had a window on the side of the chimney, and one facing the north, out on the porch. The porch on this house wasn't log or anything; it was just regular plank.

M: What kind of roof did it have?

D: Shingles.

M: Were they made of wood?

D: Yes.

M: Were they made of cedar?

D: Cypress.

M: Were they nailed on?

D: Yes, there was a heap of square nails in that house, a heap of square nails.

M: Do you know who built that house?

D: No, sir, I really don't. I ain't positive whether my uncle built that house or if it was there when he came.

M: What kind of outbuildings did you have there?

D: Well, there was an outhouse, a chicken house, a barn for stock, and a crib for your corn.

M: How far away from the house was the barn?

D: The barn was, I would say, about a hundred or maybe a hundred and fifty yards, and the crib was also about that far.

M: Was it the kind of barn with just a roof and a crib on each side?

D: No, the crib sat right away from the barn, about twenty or thirty feet. I believe that the barn had four stalls on each side, a hall in the middle, a shed on each side of those stalls for the cows, and a loft to store feed, hay.

M: The barn was to the south of the house a few hundred yards?

D: Yes, I would say a hundred or a hundred and fifty yards.

M: Was it to the southeast of the house?

D: Yes, I'd say it was east and a little bit more south, maybe a little more east than it was south.

M: How far was your outhouse from the house?

D: I guess it was, fifty, maybe seventy-five, it might have been a hundred feet.

M: A little more convenient.

D: Yes.

M: How did you get your water?

D: Had an overflowing well there.

M: Did you have a house over the well or was it just always coming up?

D: Just always coming up.

M: What did you do with all of the extra water?

D: It just ran down through the pasture.

M: What kind of animals did you raise there?

D: Just milk cows, maybe a few goats. Of course, we always had a few hogs.

M: Did you raise any truck crops?

D: Just for our family's use. When we had a little extra, we always gave it to somebody who came by and didn't have any.

M: What kind of furnishings did you have in the house?

D: Oh, we had beds, cookstoves, trunks, dressers, and chifforobes. Of course, back then there wasn't no closet space; you had chifforobes, washstands, dressers, and all.

M: Were the pieces made around here?

D: I know that the dining table and chairs and stuff like that, a lot of them were. The beds were iron beds; I don't know where they came from. I think a dresser was made by an uncle of mine on my daddy's side. He gave it to him.

M: Did it have handmade hardware on it?

D: Yes, I believe it did.

M: Did the house have doorknobs?

D: You know, at the last they put modern doors with doorknobs on the house, but at the beginning it didn't have them.

M: How did you close the door before it had doorknobs?

D: With a latch.

M: What kind of latch, an eye and hook?

D: No, a wooden latch on the door.

M: How did you open it from the outside?

D: You had a string run through a hole drilled in a board, and there was something to pick the latch up.

M: Was it a plank door?

D: Yeah.

M: Did it have big hinges on it?

D: Yes, I reckon that there were homemade iron hinges on the original door. I remember that. They were strips of iron.

M: Were they fancy?

D: Not too fancy. No sir, they weren't like you'd call fancy.

M: Did you have any flowers out in your yard?

D: Oh yes, Mama always had flowers when she could, cannas, lillies, rosebushes, and what we called a sweet-shrub bush. It was a flowering bush that had a pretty nice smell. I don't know what the name of the bush was, but we always called it sweet shrub.

M: What kind of dishes did you eat from?

D: China.

M: Were there any special patterns that you recall?

D: No, sir.

M: Do you remember the color?

D: Mother had a white set, and then she had a grayish colored set that she used all of the time. The white set was china for Sunday or company or something like that.

M: Did she cook in tin pans or cast iron?

D: Cast iron. Cast iron.

M: That is hard on the wrist.

D: Yes.

M: When you were growing up, did your mother stay pretty much around the house and let your father work the fields?

D: Yes, she'd help some in the fields. She helped when she could, not a whole lot.

M: How many children were there in your family?

D: There were seven.

M: Do you have quite a few relatives scattered all over the country?

D: All over the country, and it looks like when they moved out everybody went a separate way.

M: When did they move out of here?

D: Uncle Mabery and them left out, the best that I can remember, after Aunt Alma died of cancer in 1914. He stayed around Barton with the children for two or three years, and moved to Arkansas in about 1916 or early in 1917. He, later on, sold the place.

M: Did he sell it to your father then?

D: No, my father had moved back to Alabama. I don't really know who he sold it to, but Mr. Phillips wound up with it, Calvin Phillips. We rented the place from Calvin.

M: What kind of changes took place at that house over the years?

D: Oh man, there were tremendous changes. Before Calvin died, he remodeled it and moved onto the place himself.

M: How did he remodel it?

D: He took one of the log rooms off completely. Of course, the timbers had been damaged. Instead of replacing them, he just tore it all off, remodeled that end of the house with lumber, and covered the other log room completely, inside and out. There was no sign of the logs there. He also poured a concrete front porch on it instead of having a wooden porch. He put all modern conveniences in, a bathroom, sinks and all of that in the kitchen. He just redone it.

M: So that place was really changed?

D: Oh, yes.

M: Do you remember Miss Lucy Natcher?

D: I remember them talking about her more than anything else.

M: Did you ever hear anything about her owning land adjacent to your Aunt and Uncle Atkin's place?

D: No sir, but I am pretty sure that she did because between their place and the ferry there was a place there that they always called Miss Lucy's place.

M: Was that directly next door to you?

D: Yes, it was next door to us.

M: Can you remember the house?

D: No, the house burned down between the time that we moved away from here and the time that we moved back. We did come back a time or two, but a kid staying for just a day or two doesn't remember those things.

M: Was the house to the north or south of your Aunt and Uncle Atkin's place?

D: It was east.

M: Was there another house between there and the river?

D: No.

M: You mentioned that there were some houses on the south side of Barton Ferry Road.

D: This was on the south side? Oh, the south side of the bluff at the ferry, down at the river. Yes, they were just some old housesites that had been there, an old warehouse and several smaller buildings that were around.

M: Were those store buildings?

D: I don't know what they were, and Daddy didn't seem to know. I didn't push it to try and find out. I wish now that I had.

M: Was part of the warehouse there, or was that gone too?

D: It was all gone in 1932 when we came back here.

M: Do you remember some people named Cogsdell?

D: Yes.

M: Can you tell me where they lived?

D: Barney rented the place from Uncle Mabery when they went to Arkansas. He moved there, and he lived there for a good many years. Now, I don't know where he came from, I think that the family had been around, maybe up north in Aberdeen for awhile. Barney moved from there, and bought a little place northwest of there just a little piece.

M: Northwest of where?

D: Of the Barton ferry.

M: You don't remember how far up?

D: No, sir, I really don't. It seems to me like it was two, maybe three miles. I wouldn't swear to that.

M: Did he have any children?

D: Yes sir, he had a slew of children.

M: Can you remember any of them that might be living?

D: No sir, I don't; I really don't. Now, the only two or three of them that I really knew were a little older than I am, and they have been dead for several years.

M: What were their names?

D: Hattie was the girl's name, and she married a Holmes. They are both dead. It seems to me that the boy was named Lewis. I know that one of them was Lewis, and he left here when he was in his twenties to join the navy. He came back a few times, but never stayed more than a little while at a time. He came back to see his daddy for awhile and then left again.

M: What did you call that place when you were growing up?

D: Bartons Ferry.

- M: Was it Barton Ferry community or just Barton Ferry?
- D: Just Barton Ferry, I think.
- M: What was the Vinton community?
- D: Well, the Vinton community started up around, close around, the old schoolhouse. Of course, you know about how far they are apart, about two or two-and-a-half miles, but it was just a different community. The people all got along, visited, and all of that.
- M: So the community was up by the schoolhouse?
- D: Yes.
- M: Were you related to people up there?
- D: Yes.
- M: Can you tell me who you are related to?
- D: The Wilsons that used to be up in there, and one of the McGraws married into my mother's family, married one of her sisters.
- M: Who was that?
- D: Jim Ed McGraw. He had just a slew of sisters. Well, I don't believe that he had but three sisters and a brother. There was Wilsons: Trannie Wilson, Dennis Wilson, John Wilson, and Tobe Wilson. It seems to me like there was another one, but I can't think of his name.
- M: Where were their houses located in relation to the school?
- D: I believe that Uncle John's house was south of the old schoolhouse.
- M: That is Uncle John McGraw?
- D: John Wilson. Uncle Trannie's house was on east of the school and a little bit south. Uncle Dennis's house was still a little bit northeast of the schoolhouse, and the other one, whose name I can't think of to save my soul, was north of the schoolhouse, on the west side of the road that goes up through there.
- M: Were all of those houses old, or did your uncles build them?
- D: Oh yes, I guess that they had built them, but they were fairly old houses.
- M: Do you remember one of them that may have been a stagecoach stop at one time?
- D: No sir, I don't.

M: Do you remember a store in the Vinton area?

D: I remember seeing where the store was, on over toward the river, toward the bluff. In other words, we always called it the bluff. It is a pretty good sized bluff.

M: Where is that in relation to the cemetery?

D: It would be east, a little bit northeast from the cemetery.

M: Was there a road back to it?

D: Yes. Of course, it was all just kind of vanishing and demolished in the time that I can remember, but you could tell where the road had been by the wear and tear in the ground, the contours and everything.

M: Did you ever hear any stories about that store?

D: No sir, I am sure that there was a heap of them, but I don't remember hearing any of them.

M: Do you remember who ran it?

D: No sir, I don't right off.

M: Does the name Levi Hollins ring a bell?

D: I believe it does, yes. I think that he did run it.

M: Do you remember Mr. Hollins?

D: No sir, I don't remember ever seeing him.

M: We haven't been able to locate any blacksmith shops. Do you recall if there were any?

D: No sir, I just don't remember one, but I know good and well that there had to be one out there somewhere.

M: Were you using a blacksmith shop when you lived out there?

D: Yes, old man Jim Ed McGraw, my uncle, ran a little old shop at the different places where he lived. He was a pretty good blacksmith.

M: So he migrated quite often?

D: Yeah.

M: Where did he start out at?

D: As far as I know, he started out at just about the Monroe County line, which is on north of the Vinton schoolhouse. I don't know just exactly where they really—the first of my remembrances, was of him being there from the time he was a little kid on up.

M: Did he ever tell you any stories?

D: He told some terrible stories, yes he did.

M: Do you want to tell any of them on tape?

D: Well, when he was a kid, he dug mussels out of the river down there, mussel shells out of the river for two bits a day, standing in that water all day for twenty-five cents.

M: What did they do with the shells?

D: Somebody was supposed to be buying them to make buttons out of.

M: How old was he when he was doing that?

D: He said that he was ten or twelve years old. Of course, that's pretty young, but it is possible that he did it.

M: What else did he do?

D: He trapped for the hides of the animals.

M: Did he sell the hides?

D: Yes.

M: Where did he sell them?

D: He used to ship them . . . I can't even think where he used to ship them. Anyway, he shipped them north. He shipped them himself. He just dried them, bundled them up in bundles, and shipped them north to somebody. I don't remember who.

M: What other things did he talk about?

D: He ran a cotton gin somewhere out there for awhile, but that was on north of the schoolhouse and a little bit west. He said that there was an old cotton gin down in the Dry Creek area. He ran that for awhile. He worked there, he said, sucking the cotton off of the wagons and feeding it down, you know, and all of that kind of stuff.

M: Did he ever talk about a Trotter family?

D: Yes, I have heard him talking about the Trotters.

M: What did he have to say about them?

D: Well, I don't remember a whole lot. It seems to me that he used to think that one of the girls was real cute. He liked the old man, but he didn't like the old woman. I reckon that she must have got onto him for something that he never would admit.

M: Did he ever work for them?

D: It seems to me like he worked for them. I don't know. . . . There was a tremendous--just practically nothing. I think he worked for them by the month, maybe, for awhile.

M: I understand that there used to be a cotton slide and warehouse at Vinton.

D: Yes, I've heard him say that there was, but I don't know anything about it.

M: He didn't describe it to you or anything?

D: Nothing but that they would slide it down off that bluff onto the ships on a ramp, a chute to slide those bales of cotton down.

M: They just rolled it down onto the steamboats?

D: Yes.

M: Did he ever mention how they got their mail?

D: No, I don't believe that he did.

M: Did he ever mention what he did as a child for fun?

D: No, I don't think he ever did sit down to talk about it. Somebody shot his daddy and killed him. I don't remember all of the details about it, but Jim Ed was small when this happened. He was the oldest of the family, and I reckon that he didn't have too much fun that he could remember about.

M: Did the family stay together?

D: Yes, they stayed around there together. The Dukes were some distant kin to the McGraws. They kind of helped them out some.

M: Mrs. McGraw had to raise all of those kids, and he, more or less, had to make the money?

D: Yes, and I guess that he had it mighty rough from what he said.

M: What other kinds of labor did he do besides blacksmithing?

D: He trapped and at one time he got some trucks. He was hauling gravel, logs, and stuff like that. Of course, he farmed, too.

M: Where was the last place that he lived?

D: When my aunt died he owned the place where Jeff Ellis lives, just before you get to Wiley's on the other side of the road. Of course, Jeff built that house after Jim Ed sold the land. He sold it after my aunt died and he just sort of drifted around here, yonder and there.

M: Where did you go to school?

D: I went to Vinton a little bit, for the last little schooling that I got.

M: Who was your teacher?

D: Mrs. Andy Ellis.

M: What did the school look like?

D: It was a one-room schoolhouse.

M: Did it have desks in it?

D: Yes, at that particular time, they had desks in there.

M: Can you remember how it was set up?

D: It had double doors at the front to come in, one door at the back, and then windows. The heater was kind of at the back of the building, a wood heater. The kids kept the fires built. The men in the community would cut the wood, haul it up, and things like that. Your different grades would sit on different sides and different parts of the schoolhouse.

M: How did the teacher handle all those grades?

D: I don't know. Well, I know how she did it. The group that she wasn't talking to, or reciting and stuff like that, was sitting like they didn't know what was going on or else. That is the only way that they did it.

M: Were any pictures hanging on the wall?

D: No sir, I don't remember any, just the blackboard. The schoolhouse-- the big doors faced east, and the little door at the back was kind of on the southwest corner. Of course, the windows were on the south and on the north side of the building.

M: How many windows?

D: I would say that there were about five, probably five to the side. On light days, it was plenty light.

M: Did this building have wood shingles?

D: Yes, it had, but at this particular time, they had put a tin roof over those wood shingles.

M: What kind of chimney did it have?

D: It had a flue, a brick flue, built up with a stovepipe that came down. It had a heater instead of a fireplace, a woodburning heater.

M: You remember that building quite well. Where did people buy their groceries when you were living in there?

D: There was a store down there on the Watson place, at the last. Then there had been a store over on the Schrock place.

M: By the Watson place, do you mean right across from the cemetery?

D: Yes.

M: That would be back toward the river?

D: And down from the schoolhouse.

M: Do you remember that building?

D: It is pretty sketchy. It was just a small-like building. It had one window, maybe two, in it is all, with a little bitty front porch on it, just a small outfit that kind of came down. It didn't come all of the way out with the building. It was a porch that was put on after the building was built.

M: Was this a two-story building?

D: No, just a single story, just small.

M: Was it log?

D: No, it was frame.

M: Where were the windows in the Vinton store?

D: It was kind of on the north side of the store. The door to the store faced west. The windows, it seems to me, were both on the north side.

M: Can you give me any estimate of how many feet the building was?

D: Maybe 16'x 24'. It could vary.

M: Was there a place to tie your horses and mules?

D: There was one hitchrail, one hitchrail.

M: Was that by the porch or off to the side?

D: It was off to the south side.

M: Was there a stockyard or anything like that?

D: No.

M: Was there a house just to the north of the store?

D: I think there was a house to the north of it; I believe it was to the north.

M: Can you remember that house at all?

D: It was a pretty good-sized frame house, sitting on pillars. It was an old house but it had been pretty well preserved. It was sitting on pillars about that high off the ground. (motions)

M: Was that a dogtrot house?

D: No, it was a fancier house than that. It was kind of a square-shaped house, but not exactly square. Let's say, maybe, it had two rooms without a hall in it. If there was a hall in it, it was closed in.

M: Do you remember who lived there?

D: No.

M: Might it have been Mr. Watson?

D: It's a possibility. I really don't know.

M: This was to the north of the store and not to the east of it?

D: Yes, it was east, northeast, of the store just a little bit.

M: Was it on the road that cuts back to the river?

D: Yes, I guess that was where it was at.

M: Was there ever a barn with that house?

D: It seems to me like it was on farther toward the river, a little bit from the house.

M: I can see that I am stretching your memory here.

D: That's alright.

M: Were there any other buildings between that house and the river?

D: I don't think so; I really don't believe that there was.

M: Do you remember going down to the Vinton landing?

D: Yes.

M: Were there any other buildings back there?

D: I don't remember one.

M: There weren't any camphouses or anything?

D: No sir, not the first time that I was back there.

M: What did the land look like back then?

D: You could see up through it. There was some forest back in there, but it wasn't grown up. You could see back through it. Now, I don't imagine that you could see ten feet in front of you, hardly, but then you could. You could pretty well see down through the woods apiece. Out from the river, you could see through the swamps. They wasn't just vines and little bushes and things.

M: Where did the Andrews live?

D: At one time, they lived west of the schoolhouse, on that road that turns and runs east and west.

M: Would that be the Dry Creek Road?

D: Yes, that is the Dry Creek Road.

M: Did they live someplace else before that?

D: Well, I am pretty sure that they did, but I don't remember. That is the first place that I remember them. I didn't remember them or anything about them until we came back here in 1932, moved back into this country in 1932.

M: Were there any people named Berry living there?

D: Yes, there were some Berrys out in there.

M: Where did they live?

D: They lived closer to the Dukes, on up north of Vinton.

M: Were they related to you?

D: Not that I know of, no sir. I don't know of any relation.

M: Were there any Trotters living there?

D: No sir, not that I can remember.

M: Were there any Keatons?

D: I knew two old Keaton niggers that lived up in Monroe County.

M: What were their names?

D: Ben Keaton was the man, and Rebecca Keaton was his wife.

M: Were they from the Vinton community?

- D: I suppose; I guess that is what you would say. They had been back in there for years and years.
- M: Did they ever tell you any stories about the place?
- D: I never talked to them that much or anything. I knew them though.
- M: Were there many black people living in the area?
- D: Those were the only two that I can remember people talking about who had lived there a long, long time ago. When we moved back there were some. Will Shirley lived there on the corner where the Vinton Road turns north from the Barton Ferry Road. He lived there, and his mama and daddy were there before him. I think maybe he was born and raised there. Then, of course, when we moved back there in the 1930s there was just gobs of them out there, but they just came in or had been brought in. Whatever it was, they were here.
- M: Did your father grow cotton out there?
- D: Yes, cotton, corn, and a little hay. Of course, the only cash crop was cotton, you might say. The corn that you grew, you more or less used it yourself, or you might have a few bushels that you could sell to somebody who really needed some.
- M: What kind of plow did you use?
- D: Just a single-sweep plow. We called it sweep-stock plow. I even remember some wooden plows. My granddaddy had several of those.
- M: That was your Granddaddy Foote who lived in the ferry house?
- D: No, he lived over in this old Uithoven place. He had several of those wooden plows.
- M: Could you describe the old Uithoven place?
- D: The white frame?
- M: The one where your granddaddy lived?
- D: Well, at the time he lived there, it was a pretty good-sized old house, a nice house for back then.
- M: Did you tell me when he came to that area?
- D: He had been around in that vicinity, I don't know just where. In 1880 something, a bunch of them left and went to Texas.
- M: So he was there before that?
- D: Yes, when he came back, that was the first place that he landed. He didn't stay in Texas too long, a few years. When he came back, he

landed out there on that place and farmed it for several years. I don't know how many years.

M: Do you remember if your grandfather's farm had a smokehouse when he lived there?

D: Yes.

M: Can you describe it?

D: It was a wooden smokehouse with a dirt floor, a log smokehouse.

M: Did it have bricks under the logs?

D: No, I don't believe it did. I believe that the logs were right down on the ground. They threw dirt in it, wheelbarrowed dirt into those smokehouses, to build the floors up off the ground so that the water wouldn't get in them. They hung meat up in there, you know, and smoked it.

M: How big was this smokehouse?

D: It was, I guess, about 18'x 20', something like that. They had a pretty good-sized smokehouse.

M: How far behind the house was it?

D: Oh, most of the time, about fifty or sixty feet.

M: Were there any other buildings there?

D: No, they usually kept the smokehouse out there by itself.

M: Where was the outhouse?

D: It would be . . . the smokehouse would be on maybe the southeast corner, and the outhouse would be kind of to the northwest part of the house.

M: Was this house one story?

D: I was thinking that it was a story-and-a-half. I really think that at one time it had two rooms upstairs.

M: Could you stand up in it?

D: Yes, two of the boys, I think, slept up there.

M: Was there a kitchen?

D: Yes, it was separate from the house, two rooms built onto the northeast end. There were two rooms there with a porch going down the side of it, not a hall, just a porch going down the side of it.

M: Did this house have four chimneys?

D: I don't remember four chimneys; I remember two, one on each end. That is all I remember.

M: Were there any wood stoves besides the kitchen stove?

D: There was one for the kitchen, and a flue for it in the back. A flue is what we called it. It came down through the ceiling, was made out of brick, and you stuck your stovepipe in it. There was one of them in the kitchen.

M: What was the wallpaper like when your grandparents lived there?

D: It wasn't papered; it was just rough, plank sealing. Yes, it was just rough plank sealing.

M: Did they have plaster on the walls?

D: No, sir.

M: It was just wooden walls?

D: Yes sir, just wooden walls.

M: What kind of furniture was there?

D: Grandma had beds there, old tall, wooden beds. The footboards would be this tall. (motions)

M: That is nearly four feet tall?

D: Yes, and the headboards would be on up, six-and-a-half feet tall.

M: Did they have marble-top dressers?

D: Grandmother had one marble-top dresser and a marble-top washstand.

M: Do you remember the basin that sat on that stand?

D: Yes, a big, white bowl, washpan, and a big, white pitcher. I remember that well. I'd love to have that thing now.

M: Did she have pictures on the walls?

D: Yes.

M: What were they of?

D: They were of different people, family people, and things like that.

M: In fancy frames?

D: Yes.

M: Did she have any landscapes?

D: I don't believe so.

M: What kind of rugs did she have?

D: I can't remember a rug.

M: She had just regular plank floors?

D: Yes.

M: Did she have a spinning wheel?

D: Yes, I don't remember ever seeing her use it, other than showing how she would use it.

M: How did she do it? Did she have to stand up?

D: Yes.

M: And she walked across the room?

D: Yes.

M: What about a loom? Did she make cloth?

D: I don't think so. I never saw a loom or heard her say anything about that.

M: Do you remember what kind of dishes you ate from, the special dishes, when you went to your grandma's house?

D: They were flowered. That is the biggest thing that I remember, and she would have pitchers with each set of dishes, nice big pitchers. There was a big homemade safe. I think she said that one of her brothers made it for her. It looked to me like it was a couple of feet deep, and four or five feet wide, fancy doings you know. I don't remember the hardware on it now, nothing only that it had knobs to open the doors.

M: Did it have screen?

D: No, it had glass.

M: Was there any colored glass in windows of the house?

D: There was colored glass, partly, on this safe that I am talking about.

M: Was there colored glass around the door?

D: No, I don't even remember any glass in the door at all. I don't think there was.

M: Was the central hallway closed off?

D: Yes.

M: It had doors at both ends?

D: Yes.

M: Was there anything special about those doors?

D: No sir, I can't remember a thing.

M: Do you know who built the house?

D: No.

M: Was a man named Bardine Richardson living in the area when your grandfather came?

D: I don't believe that I remember the name.

M: Let's go back to the house and talk a little bit more about furnishings. Were there any couches in the house?

D: I can't remember one.

M: How were the rooms used? There were two rooms on the south side of the house, right?

D: That was the kitchen and dining room.

M: Was the kitchen on the northeast side of the house?

D: Yes, the two rooms on the south side were bedrooms.

M: What room was the sitting room?

D: It was the front room, the first room, the first room as you go into the house, on the north end of the house.

M: Was the next room the dining room?

D: No, there was a bedroom next to that sitting room. You had to go out on the back porch to go to the dining room and kitchen. You didn't go out the bedroom into the kitchen. You had to come out on the porch, no matter how cold it was, to go to the kitchen and dining room.

M: Was the kitchen separate from the house or was it joining it?

D: It was right onto the house, but you came back into the hall, out of your bedroom or out of the sitting room. You walked down the hall and out onto the porch into the kitchen and dining room.

M: Did your grandparents have cooks?

D: Grandmother did the cooking.

M: What kind of trees do you remember being in the yard?

D: Cedar trees, big cedar trees.

M: Were they standing in any particular order?

D: To my best recollection, there were. It seems to me that there were six, but I know that there were four. They were spaced like they had been set out forty feet apart, something like that. Maybe they were thirty feet back west from the house, and they were in a row. I could be wrong a foot or two on this, within a few feet either way, but I think they were in rows. There were two on the south of the house that were, more or less, like they had been put out there. You just don't see them come up like that. They were tremendous cedars.

M: Did you grandpa and grandma keep an orchard?

D: They probably did, but I don't remember that.

M: Let's move back inside the house. Can you describe the mantle pieces to me?

D: The mantles? They were big thick boards. In fact, they were built into the chimney, stuck back into the chimney like a brick. It seems to me like they were about as thick as a brick.

M: So, the front of the fireplace, inside, was all brick? It was just a place cut out in the wall that they had built the fireplace into, and they built the mantle into the fireplace?

D: Yes, when they got up to where they wanted the mantle, it looked like they just, instead of putting in some brick there, stuck the board in and that was it.

M: What kind of andirons did they have in the fireplace?

D: They were great big things.

M: Were they fancy?

D: No, they weren't, I think, anything too fancy. They looked, more or less, like a lot of them that you saw. I don't know whether you would find any now or not. They would be just some that somebody had made. I'm sure that somebody made them, but I don't know who. Well, they probably had a little fancy stuff to them. They would be twisted at the top, maybe a couple rolls or something like that, then they came on down and split, came out that way with the legs on them.

- M: Do you know if the local blacksmith made them?
- D: No, they were made locally. I am pretty sure they were, but I don't know who made them.
- M: Let's go back to the log smokehouse for a minute. Were there shelves in the smokehouse?
- D: Yes, there were shelves on two sides of it. I suppose that they kept canned fruit in there and stuff like that.
- M: What kind of jars did your grandmother can fruit in?
- D: Glass jars with glass tops and wire to seal them.
- M: Did she use crocks at all?
- D: Yes, she had some crocks that she put the pickles, sauerkraut, and stuff like that in.
- M: Were they kept in the smokehouse, too?
- D: Yes.
- M: Were the shelves nailed onto the wall or were they built into the logs?
- D: I believe that they were nailed on. I might be wrong on that. Across the end where there was no opening into the building, was a big box that they salted their meat down in.
- M: How big was this big box?
- D: Oh, it looked to me like it was three feet wide and about ten or twelve feet long, maybe a couple of feet deep.
- M: Were there any windows in this building?
- D: No.
- M: Was there a walk up to the building, or were there any brick walls around the house?
- D: No, I don't believe so. Now, I believe there was one at the front of the house, from the front gate. Of course, you had a yard gate and I believe there was a brick walk from the gate to the steps of the front porch. I believe that was the only one.
- M: What kind of an outhouse did it have? Was it a one-seater or a two-seater?
- D: Two-seater, and it was, I believe, north of the house toward the river.

- M: Did it have anything special about the way it was built?
- D: No, it didn't. It was just them oblong holes. I know that you have seen pictures of them. I guess maybe, it had one, or two, or three of them in it.
- M: Did it have a moon cut in the door?
- D: Didn't have that, no.
- M: You don't remember the kind of hinges they used on that, do you?
- D: No, I really don't.
- M: Was this a frame building?
- D: Yes, it was frame.
- M: It was nailed together?
- D: Yes, it was nailed together.
- M: That is a pretty good description. What kind of fences were around the house?
- D: They had a special kind. I guess that you would call it a yard fence. It was a wire, but it was like a mesh wire. Of course, it wasn't welded or anything back then, but it was kind of like a mesh wire.
- M: How big were the spaces in it?
- D: The best that I recollect, it was about two or three inches.
- M: Did your grandparents ever keep animals in the yard, or did they keep them away from the house?
- D: They kept them away from the house.
- M: So your grandfather was a farmer besides running the ferry?
- D: Yes.
- M: Can you tell me where his fields were?
- D: They would have been west of the house.
- M: How far west?
- D: Oh, they probably started at about two or three hundred yards, and then ran southwest.
- M: Where did your grandmother draw her water? Do you remember a dug well?

- D: No, they had an overflowing well to the west and a little south of the house. It was a couple hundred yards from the house.
- M: Did she carry the water up with buckets?
- D: Yes.
- M: Wooden buckets?
- D: Yes, cedar buckets.
- M: Did anybody there make those buckets?
- D: They bought them, I am sure. If there was anybody around there that made them, I don't know it. I don't know where they came from.
- M: Who was their nearest neighbor?
- D: I have to think on that, but there were several houses between where this old Uithoven house is now and the road down there.
- M: And people lived in there?
- D: Yes, it seems to me like they were all on the west side of that road. I ain't going to swear to that, now.
- M: They were all on the other side of the road from your grandparents?
- D: Yes.
- M: So, there was your grandparents' house, then two hundred yards or so from that, to the west, was the well.
- D: And then south of there, up and down the road, there were maybe two houses. I know there were two houses on the west of the road coming on down.
- M: Do you remember those houses at all?
- D: Nothing, only just houses.
- M: Do you remember any names associated with them?
- D: No, sir.
- M: Does the name Keller ring a bell?
- D: No.
- M: At one time there was an old road that ran to Vinton. Was that still in use?
- D: Yes.

M: What was that road like when you saw it?

D: It was just, more or less, a trail. Of course, that was about what any of them were back then.

M: Did anyone ever tell you that the road along the river was an old stagecoach road?

D: No, I've heard it but not until recently.

M: Were there houses along that road all the way up to Vinton?

D: I can't remember but two, and they were just kind of small, maybe with a couple of rooms, something like that.

M: Did those smaller houses have porches?

D: No.

M: They were just oblong houses?

D: Yes.

M: Were they built up off the ground?

D: They were sitting fairly low. They probably had pillars, or a block or a piece of wood cut off, but they were close to the ground.

M: They weren't brick pillars?

D: I'd imagine that they were just wooden pillars.

M: Did they put square pieces of oak into the ground?

D: Yes, a heap of times. They would just cut a log three foot long, cut it, peel the bark off of it, and put it where they were going to put it. They dug out a place in the ground, laid it down where it wouldn't roll or rock, flattened the top of it, and just used it for a pillar. Sometimes they might just set it up where they sawed it off, just sit the one sawed end on the ground, and begin building on the top end. I've seen a good many of them like that.

M: How far away from your grandparents house were they?

D: It seems to me that they were only about a half a mile. One was about a half a mile, and about two or three hundred yards up the road there was another one. There weren't anymore that I can remember until you got on up to the Watsons and that store over there. Yes, I can remember now. There could have been some in there, but I can't remember.

M: Was somebody living in the Vinton store when you knew the building?

D: There wasn't anybody living in the store, but there was somebody living in the house. I just can't remember who in the world it was.

M: Did your grandfather ever talk about fishing on the river?

D: He fished some. He'd set out trotlines, and also made splint baskets.

M: What kind of tools did he use to do that with?

D: He would use a drawknife, or an axe. He used wedges and a maul to get it down to small size and then used a drawknife. Do you know what a drawknife is?

M: Will you tell me?

D: It is a knife that is about a foot and a half long, sharpened on one edge with wooden handles on each end that came straight out from it. The blade is beveled on one side. You sharpen it on one side, and the other side is slick. You can just shave anything down. He would make those splints out of white oak because it would last longer and would work easier. You could whittle them down as thin as you wanted.

M: Did he use a bench when he did that?

D: Yes.

M: What kind of bench did he have?

D: He had a wooden vise that he fastened his splints in. The wooden vise was fastened on the bench. He would split them down with an axe until they were about a half-an-inch wide, or an inch wide, and three or four inches thick. He would fasten them in the vise to hold them up. He had a stop on the end of his bench for it to stick against. Then he would just bring it down with that drawknife.

M: Did he have a workshop up there?

D: I think that he had a little shed or something out there. Maybe, he did all of that, made cotton baskets and corn baskets, inside the barn.

M: How big were these baskets?

D: He had feed baskets that would be about a bushel.

M: Were they round?

D: Most of his cotton baskets would be sort of square. Corn baskets were round. They would hold a bushel or a bushel and a half in ear corn, and a hundred and fifty or two hundred pounds of cotton.

M: Did he raise pork?

D: For his own use.

M: Where did he do his scalding?

D: Close to the well.

M: So it was down in front of the house?

D: Yes.

M: How did he do it?

D: They would have a barrel or something and they would anchor it in the ground. After they would come out of the water, he would lay the hogs out on some boards and scrape them. He used boards so they wouldn't get down on the ground. There were enough folks around there that they would just take the hog and size or dress him after he was killed and bled. They would stick him in that water, and there is an art in that. If you leave it in that water too long or have the water too hot, you will make the hair set on there and you can't get it off.

M: So, how long do you leave it in?

D: I don't know. It seems to me like he used to put it in there, let it sit for about a minute, then pull it out to let it air a little, and then let it go back in. They let it stay a little bit longer the second time, then they pulled that end of the hog out and put the other end in, and did it the same way.

M: Was this a metal barrel that they used?

D: No, it was a wooden barrel.

M: How did they heat the water?

D: They heated it in the old washpots.

M: Were they black, cast-iron pots?

D: Yes, black, cast-iron pots.

M: You would build a fire under that pot?

D: Yes, he filled it full of water, built a fire under it, got the water near about hot, and then killed a hog or two, according to the help they had. If you had enough help to handle two or three, you might kill two or three or four hogs at one time.

M: How many people would it take to kill a hog?

D: According to the size of your hog. Back then they usually killed four or five hundred pound hogs, so it took about three or four men

for a hog that big. Two men could handle a two-hundred-pound hog alright.

M: Was it quite a community effort?

D: Yes.

M: How far did the people come from?

D: Back then, people would go two or three miles to help you.

M: Did people from the Vinton community come down?

D: Yes, and people from here would go up there.

M: Did people from as far away as south of Highway 50 go up there?

D: Yes, they probably did if you needed them.

M: What did they do about doctoring?

D: There would usually be somebody in the community that was pretty good with the croup and stuff like that. If they couldn't handle it there would probably be a doctor in West Point, or maybe one in Kolola Springs, or across the river in Lowndes County, or one up in Monroe County at Darracott.

M: So, there were plenty of doctors?

D: I wouldn't say that there were plenty, but people just didn't use doctors like they do now.

M: What did they do?

D: Well, they just doctored themselves with whatever remedies they had, herbs and things.

M: Do you know what kind of herbs your grandma used?

D: She used to have her own catnip tea. They used to raise that in the garden. There was something else you raised in a garden that she would use for colds and fever.

M: Did she gather anything out of the woods?

D: There might have been, but I just don't remember. There was catnip, and I've tried to think of what the root was that she would get out of the garden.

M: Did she ever doctor you when you were little?

D: Not that I remember.

M: What kind of patent medicine did they use?

- D: I can remember Vicks salve, castor oil, calamine and epsom salts from way back. That is as far back as I can remember.
- M: I don't mean to get too personal, but did your grandfather ever drink whiskey?
- D: Oh, man, yes! He drank enough whiskey to float Clay County.
- M: What kind of bottles did it come in? Was it a homebrew that was made around here?
- D: He used to get it in half-gallons with glass containers, stone containers. I have seen him with stone containers, half-gallons and glass bottles with one handle on each side of the mouth to stick your finger in.
- M: Did he ever buy whiskey in bottles like we have today?
- D: You see, he'd order it most of the time. I don't know where he got it, but he would get it in different kinds of stone jugs. If it was fancy, it would come in those glass jugs that I was telling you about.
- M: What kind of pictures?
- D: Just of some old, long-haired guy drinking this whiskey and stuff like that.
- M: You don't remember the names of the whiskeys?
- D: No, I really don't.
- M: What did they do with the whiskey bottles, the fancy ones? Were they nice enough to sit around?
- D: They were just throwed away. Some of them were probably nice enough to sit around, but they were just throwed away.
- M: Where did they throw them?
- D: Just anywhere. I really don't have any idea. I wish a thousand times that I knew.
- M: Did they generally bury the garbage or did they just throw it out?
- D: They threw it back in the hollow.
- M: I asked that because we are excavating the yard at Cedar Oaks, and we are wondering what we will find. What happened when your grandfather's blacksmith tools wore out, when a file wore out or a knife broke? Would they try to reuse them?
- D: Yes, they would try to fix them. Different people would do different

things. One guy could maybe forge weld something, the next guy couldn't do that; he probably could make a plow handle or something like that.

M: Did your grandfather have his own forge?

D: No, he never did.

M: He took that up to somebody else?

D: Yes.

M: We have talked about scalding hogs and the inside of the house, but we haven't talked about how the furniture was sitting in the house. Can you remember where the beds sat in the southern bedroom? Was there a dresser in each bedroom or had they been using chifforobes that early?

D: Yes, Grandma had some chifforobes. It seems like she had two chifforobes in the south bedroom, the biggest room on the south side, and two beds. One sat in the right-hand corner as you go in, in the south end of the room. There was another one in the northeast corner. A chifforobe sat at the foot of the bed and a dresser was sitting down on the north end.

M: What about the southeast bedroom?

D: There were two beds in it but there wasn't as much room. You know what I mean?

M: Now these were both tall beds?

D: These were extremely tall beds in the south bedroom, yes.

M: Where did they keep their trunks?

D: At the foot of the beds.

M: Were they round-top trunks?

D: Yes.

M: What kind of hardware did they have? Was it ornate brass?

D: I am pretty sure she had one or two of the brass-hardware trunks. In the other bedroom, the trunks and beds weren't quite as nice, but they were still big wooden bedsteads.

M: How was the sitting room arranged?

D: It had chairs, rocking chairs, some straight chairs.

M: Were they homemade chairs? Were they the straight, ladder-back kind with oak seats?

D: Straight ladder-backs with oak strip seats. The backs were made out of oak splints.

M: How many were there?

D: Oh, there was several of them. There was, it seems to me, what she called a loveseat, but it was a couch.

M: Did it have carvings on the back of it?

D: Yes.

M: And a velvet kind of upholstery?

D: Yes, a blue color, I believe, but it could have been green.

M: Were the walls painted at all?

D: No, just plain.

M: Was the wood rough, or was it smooth?

D: I don't know. I guess that it must have been rough but I really don't know. It might have been smooth.

M: Were there any chandeliers?

D: No.

M: No glass lights at all?

D: No.

M: They had kerosene lamps?

D: Yes.

M: Did they have any cast-iron lamp holders on the wall?

D: I can't remember one of them.

M: Was there a table or something in the living room to put the lamps on?

D: I know that there were a couple of tables in there. Seems like one was over in this corner, and one table was a little bigger than the other.

M: Was it round?

D: One of them could have been round. One of them had a square top.

M: A marble top?

D: No, the legs on it were made on a machine, rounded out.

M: A claw foot?

D: Yes, and I think that the largest one had glass feet. It was kind of square.

M: The decorations in there were family portraits?

D: Yes.

M: Can you remember any of the people in those pictures?

D: No, I sure can't. I've tried and tried.

M: Now, the next room back, on the north side, was a bedroom?

D: Yes, I don't think that there was but one bed in that room.

M: The kitchen had the pie safe. Did it have a table and chairs?

D: Yes.

M: What kind of table was that?

D: Oh, it was a heck of a big table. It was a very nice table for back then. The lumber was all smooth and all.

M: Was it a handmade table?

D: Yes, it was a handmade table. The legs were garnished with something.

M: It sounds very nice. We have discussed the dishes that your grandmother was using. I'd like to talk a little more about your grandfather and his tools. Did he ever make boats there, skiffs of any kind?

D: Not that I know of.

M: So he wouldn't have kept any tools around for that?

D: No.

M: Did he take care of his own horses hooves? Did he do his own trimming?

D: It don't seem like he did. It seems like he got somebody else to do that.

M: What kind of wagon, buggy, or carriage did he keep?

D: A wagon, I think and maybe a buggy. Yes, it seems to me like he did have a buggy.

M: Do you remember if it was a single horse or double horse buggy?

D: I believe it was single.

M: What about the harness?

D: They weren't decorated, just plain.

M: So, if we find anything there it will probably be normal harness buckles.

D: Yes. I wouldn't think that you would find anything he had that would be fancy, not that I can remember, no way in the world.

M: What is your earliest memory of your grandpa and grandma?

D: Really, I believe that about the first I remember was going there and seeing them, and thinking what a nice place that was.

M: Were there any ceramic knickknacks for you to knock off shelves or tables?

D: Not that I remember.

M: There were so many beds in the house, did they have a large family?

D: Yes, there were five boys and six girls.

M: That is a big family!

D: Yes.

M: Did they all have to help around the farm?

D: Yes, everybody had something to do. Yes, sir.

M: What year did your grandparents leave that house?

D: I can't even remember that; I just really don't.

M: Do you think that it was in the 1920s sometime?

D: I think it was before the 1920s.

M: Do you know who moved into it after they moved?

D: No, when they left there they went way up in Monroe County, on the other side of Amory.

M: The Uithovens did live there at one time, didn't they?

D: Yeah, they were living there. That might be the reason that my granddaddy left. I don't know.

M: Do you remember them making any changes to the house?

D: No, I don't.

M: Did you know any people named Coltrane?

D: No, I don't believe that I do.

M: Do you remember any people named Hutchinson?

D: I remember hearing them talk about some.

M: There is a stream there called the Willis branch. Do you recall the Willis family?

D: No, I don't.

M: What about Cox?

D: I can't recall no Cox.

M: What about a place called Colbert? Did your grandparents talk about that at all?

D: Not that I remember.

M: It is pretty hard to remember that far back. Can you tell me who Frank Andrews is?

D: Frank is dead, Frank Andrews.

M: Is that the man who lived north of Vinton?

D: Yes.

M: Did he have children?

D: Yes, he had one son that I know about. He's dead.

M: What was his name?

D: Bradley Andrews. Bradley's wife, Mrs. Bessie Andrews, is in the hospital in West Point right now. I noticed her name in the paper last night.

M: I think that we have covered almost everything that I had to ask you about today.

D: If you think of something later on, holler.

M: I appreciate the open invitation.

D: I wish that I could have told you something that would have really helped you.

M: You have told me a great deal, and I am sure that it will be a great help.

D: I hope it will. I can't think of anything else.

M: Thank you very much.



Figure 3. James Henry Dobson.
Photo courtesy of A. E.
Wilson.



Figure 4. Ollie Lenorah Foote
Dobson. (called Nona)
Photo courtesy of Woodrow
Dobson.



Figure 5. Catherine Westbrook
Wilson. (called Katie
Lou) Photo courtesy of
Mabel Dobson Jennings.



Figure 6. The Foote family at Cedar Oaks, ca. 1909. Front row, left to right: Oscar, Elmer, Grandfather Henry Wilson, Annie Wilson Foote, Bertha, Irma, Berma, William Sidney Foote. Back row, left to right: Bud, Nona, Cassie. Photo courtesy of Mabel Dobson Jennings.

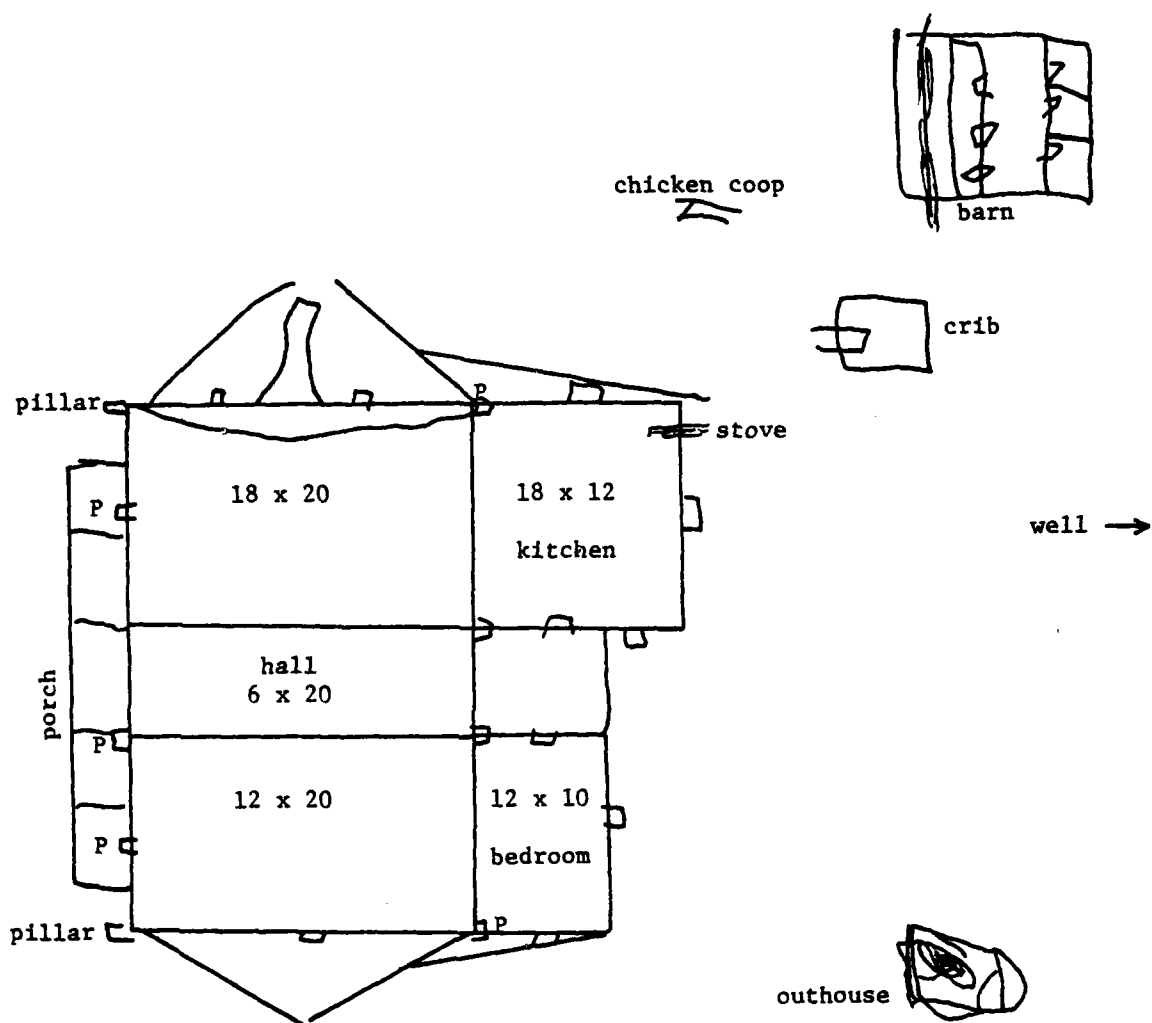


Figure 7. Floor plan of the Atkins-Phillips house. Drawing by Woodrow Dobson.

THTP - Oral History Interview OH 127

An interview with
Hattie H. Box

conducted and edited by
Peggy Uland Anderson



Hattie Box was born in the community of Barton Ferry, Mississippi in 1909. She is a member of the Cogsdell family, one of the oldest families in the Vinton area. Many of the structures and persons that she had known in her childhood were described in this transcript. Personal incidents connected with them were also recorded, adding life to architectural and genealogical information. This interview was useful in the location of structures originally associated with the towns of Barton and Vinton.

The interview with Mrs. Box was conducted in her home by Peggy U. Anderson on March 5, 1980. Also present was Mr. Travis Box.

U: This is an interview with Mrs. Hattie Box for the Tombigbee Historic Townsites Project by Peggy Uland on March 5, 1980 at Mrs. Box's home. Her address is 701 Waterworks Road, Apt. 2, Eupora, Mississippi. Her telephone number is 258-2313.

Mrs. Box, could you tell me when and where you were born?

B: I was born in the High-water house at Bartons Ferry in 1909. Of course, I wasn't aware of all of that. I later was in and out of there during my growing up time and all. My mother died in a house right across the road from the Uithovens. It was a house that later burned. During that lapse of time, I was growing up first one place and then another, until I was about five years old. Then I came back and lived at Vinton for a short time, until my aunt died. Then I was just with first one and then the other. I just moved around until after I married. Then afterwards I found out more about what had actually happened there.

There was an old two-story house that stood on Bartons Ferry, out from where the ferry is. My dad's oldest brother was running the ferry. I can remember him running the ferry alright. Then that house burned; in fact, it burned while it was in the Cogsdell family.

U: Is that the house that you call the High-water house?

B: No, it's right near where Eldridge Uithoven is living. It was on this ridge behind the Uithoven house. There was a little wooden house, about two rooms, I imagine. That house stood there; it was standing when I left up there.

U: I want to be sure what you mean by the Uithoven house, because I can think of two places that we've been told that the Uithovens lived. Do you mean the one down by the Bartons Ferry landing or the one back up the hill?

B: The one back up on the hill; that one down by the landing is the one I'm talking about burning. That is the old Uithoven home up on the hill, so far as I know it. The High-water house stood then right out on the hill.

U: Overlooking the river?

B: Well, not that far. It was up high. When it flooded, they had to move out and go there. That is what they used it for then. We were living in it at that time. I don't know the reason why. My father lived out in there practically all of his life. He was kind of close-mouthed. I don't have any dates or anything. I tell you what I will do. I'll have to mail it to you. I have a half-brother who is working up the Cogsdell family tree. He may have some dates which he has gotten back to four generations.

U: What is his name?

B: Cogsdell.

U: What's his first name?

B: Thomas. I don't know whether he carries the Barney on down or the Churchill. Thomas is his first name, Thomas Churchill. He's getting those dates up. I'll try to call him sometime right away and ask him about what he has gotten up and let him mail it to me. I'll see what he's got, and then I can send it on to you. I know you're going to have plenty of time.

U: Or we could stop back again, if that was convenient.

B: I don't know. I know I can't give you any dates at all on the times that they were out out there. I lived out there two years after I married. Well, I lived in the old Uithoven house one year, and I lived in the log house just before you get to the Uithoven's. It burned in later years after I lived out there. It's gone. In fact, I haven't been around in a long time out there. I'm sure about the other, because I did live in it.

U: Have you ever heard the High-water house called the Whaley Hill house?

B: No.

U: Could you explain to me what the High-water house looked like?

B: It's a little old two-room cabin. That's about all it was.

U: Was it log or plank?

B: It was plank.

U: Did it have a chimney?

B: I think, in the middle.

U: Did it have a hallway between the rooms?

B: It was just merely a makeshift. What it was built for at the time was just to get out from down here when it overflowed. It does overflow, pretty rough sometimes. No, it was just a little old. . . . I never was actually in it later, but I know there wasn't but two rooms over there.

U: Was it on the ridge that's behind the Uithoven house?

B: Well, now if I'm going in the gate and going up the road and then up to the Uithoven house, it's right on from the back of the Uithoven house.

U: Did it have any flowers or anything around it?

B: No. There wasn't anything around it. I was living in the Uithoven house when the chimney fell down. It was snowing outside one night. That's when I lived out there, too.

U: Do you know when that was?

B: No, that was in the 1940s though somewhere. I had my head up on the mantelpiece one night, and I kept hearing something popping and popping. I looked to see. I always set my teakettle down in front of the fireplace at night. I kept looking around and looking. Couldn't find nothing. Directly, that thing let loose and every bit went right out in the yard, fire, fireplace and all. Sure was a good thing it didn't come inside.

U: Which end of the house?

B: Well, the house faces the dirt road as you call it. It was in the left-hand side of the house if you're in the house, and the right-hand side if you're going up to it. That was the one that fell down. It was snowing like the mischief.

U: Did you live in there for a year?

B: Yes.

U: What did the house look like when you lived there?

B: Well, it wasn't such a bad house. Of course, it wasn't a new house. It still had the plank walk and the kitchen house to it. It was out from the house like they built them then. It was cut up pretty bad. Let's see, there were two rooms, and a hall, and a dining room, and a kitchen, and then a shed room. My children were all small then; all but the girl could sleep in one room.

U: Where did the walk that went out to the kitchen come off the house?

B: What we all used for a kitchen was that other one that was just standing there. There was plenty of room out there for a dining room, too. Back in them days with the way they arranged it and the way they called it, I imagine that would have been the dining room, and they would eat in the kitchen everyday. For the Sunday dining room they would use another room. I imagine that's the way it was built. It was hand lath and plaster on the inside. Those laths were hand hewn. For it to have been on there as many years as it had been then, it would have had to been, I think, good quality. It wasn't really in bad condition; it wasn't all falling off. There was some places alright. There wasn't any nails in it. No, it was pegged together back then.

U: How did you get out to that extra room that was off the back?

B: A little walkway.

U: Where did it come off the house?

B: The back door.

TB: You see, up about so high was the back door, and they just had a walk they built over to that kitchen part. The kitchen part's a separate building out back.

B: Just one big room.

U: Was the back door in that main hallway.

B: No, not in the main hall. They used it as a kitchen, and I'm pretty sure it was used as a dining room. You bring the food right in from there. It wasn't bad.

U: Were there any other buildings standing in the backyard?

B: There was a well out there, but it was not usable. I don't know how deep the thing had been. I think that anybody that had ever lived there put the trash in it.

U: Where was it?

B: Well, right out behind that kitchen thing, right by the side of it. My husband threw a cat in it one time and thought he had killed it. I heard him meowing in the night and got up going to hunt for him. It wasn't my cat, or I wouldn't have worried quite as much. It belonged to the people that had moved from there.

TB: Here's the way those old houses are built. You see, there is a hallway all the way through here, and this is open. This is a back porch which went right down the side here; this is what they call an ell, that goes off into the kitchen, which was built off separate out here. There were four rooms, and this was a hallway all through the house.

B: No, that one don't go that way.

TB: I know. That's the way all those old houses were built.

B: Oh, I know that is the main way.

TB: The kitchen is built off, you see, but there is a little plank walk that goes down to the kitchen door right here. That's the way they were built.

U: Was there another small building off the back off the kitchen or a smokehouse?

B: Not anymore. They weren't standing anymore when I was living there. I know there was a smokehouse there, back when it was first usable. There was no barn. It was a remnants of where a big barn had been,

but there was just a little old shack of a barn over there when we were there. The barn was across the road. It was across the road.

U: Up on another little ridge right there?

B: Yeah, kind of a ridge. It just goes down in a hollow there. It just goes up to the house. The barn was over on the other side.

U: Do you know who was living there before you moved in?

B: The Uithovens. Well, all the older ones had died out. Then all the rest had married and moved off, but the youngest girl was still living there when we moved in behind them.

U: What was her name?

B: Lord have mercy, I done forgot who she married. Frances. . . . I honestly can't remember who she married, but I believe she is a Rhea. I wouldn't be sure about that. It's been a long time since I was up there; it's about twenty-five years since I even left West Point, or longer.

U: What were your mother's and father's names?

B: Mother's name before she married?

U: Yes.

B: Mabel Myers--she's got a middle name, but I can't remember it either--and Barney Churchill Cogsdell. That's C-O-G-S-D-E-L-L. Well, one in the family has left off the "s" which is not the original way to spell it. That's a name that I've never heard of or read of. There aren't any more Cogsdells except this half-brother.

U: Where does he live?

B: In Mobile. My brother died. There was just he and I. He died about eight years ago, I guess.

U: What was his name?

B: Barney Allen.

U: You said your mother died when you were little.

B: Eighteen months old.

U: Was she buried out there?

B: Yes, she's buried out there. Buried at. . . . I don't know whether they call that Vinton Cemetery or something else. Must be Vinton Cemetery. When my daddy died, I had tried to find where she was buried. I was going to have him buried by her. I didn't know that

the thing was in such a shape. In fact, really and truly I had never known definitely where she was buried, but I did find out then and went out there to see. It was some of the older people that could tell me.

I'll tell you somebody else that can give you an awful lot of information right there in West Point. That's Lee Alton Duke. It just happened to dawn on me. He can really give you more, a lot of it, because his mother and all of them lived out in Vinton. They were out there; they're older than I am, and they would know more. He might be able to give you some dates of things out there. I just don't know, I just know I'd love to be back out there.

U: Did you like it?

B: Yeah, I did. The two years I lived out there were just about the happiest two my kids had. All of us really enjoyed it more than anything I know of.

U: When your mother died, did your father take you and live someplace else, or did you go live with relatives?

B: Well, I lived with my father's people until I was about ten years old. When I was ten, I was standing on a box and washing dishes for my board. It was just first one place and then the other until I was up pretty good-sized. Then I went to live with my mother's brother-in-law; her sister was dead too. They were in West Point. Uncle Charlie was a Kehl, an old German family. Then I married from there on out.

U: Did your father ever remarry?

B: No. He could have, but he wouldn't do it.

U: Did your dad have any brothers or sisters?

B: Yes. He had brothers, but now they're all gone. That's what I was telling you about. His oldest brother. . . . He was blind before he died. They ran that ferry down there some.

U: What was his name?

B: Jim. The youngest brother was Dan. I honestly cannot right offhand tell you what it is. I think they went from there. He went from the ferry over across the river. I don't know what that's called over there now. It ain't called nothing but the air base over there now. Their original old home was about in the middle of where the air base is. I can't remember the first name, which is not important to know, I don't guess.

U: Could you describe the house that is right at the ferry landing, the one that sits on the hill there?

B: The one that sat on the hill. There's some little shacks back on

the hill now, but it was a big two-story house. I've seen a picture of it. That's the way I can just describe it. In the picture that we had, it didn't even have a porch on it. Why I don't know. They were sitting out in the yard. I can remember it very definitely. They were sitting out in the yard in straight back chairs and leaning back against the house. There were two or three out in front. It was just a plain two-story house. I guess you moved from downstairs to upstairs when the water got in the bottom story. I would have never lived there. That's one place you wouldn't. . . .

U: Were you ever inside that house?

B: No. Well, I'll be darn swizard. It was this oldest uncle's wife that had those pictures and things. She's dead; she lived until a few years ago. She only had two children, and I think they're both dead. In fact, I know the one is. Since I've gotten away, and they was mixed out, they don't notify me. It seemed to me like Thomas Cogsdell told me during his tracing up of this and that and the other that Annie Burke Cogsdell was still living. Well, that's only been a couple of years ago though; she's in Columbus. She's been deformed all of her life; she is just a year or so older than I am. She's the one that had the old pictures back in there on that place.

U: Is she your cousin?

B: Yeah, the girl would be. I can also find out from Thomas what her address is, because he interviewed her. She gave him a lot of information.

U: Did you say that that house burned down?

B: The big one did. It burned down a good many years ago. I don't know if the Uithovens were living in that house when it burned down. You see, it done come on out of our family by then.

Then they must have built that one up on the hill or somebody did. No, because the one up on the hill was there during the Civil War. I guess it was just somebody else's before then, but that's the original family that I know of living there. That's about all that is really the actual part that I do know, unless there is something else that you could think of that you might mention that I could answer.

U: Was there ever another house on the bluff there where the big two-story house was?

B: To my knowledge, no, but now I couldn't say. There's house places up the river going towards Aberdeen. There is house places along up in there in some places. You can nearly almost always find those old house places. I'm pretty sure that the hotel. . . . There was a town. . . . There was a trading . . . a landing place or whatever you want to call it. I think it was up the river. There was a hotel where they come in there on boats. The stuff was there, and some of it they hauled to West Point. I've heard that.

U: Was it upriver from Bartons Ferry?

B: That's my remembrance of trying to get it straight. It was either in Colbert or Vinton. No, it wasn't in Vinton. It was up the river. It was bound to be. Well, the hotel was in the town that may be the oldest landing.

TB: Back in them days, they had trading posts at each landing all up and down that river.

B: They wouldn't have them that close together, though.

TB: Not too close together, but it's about like city shipping points now on the Mississippi. It worked on a small schedule like the Mississippi River does and a big schedule.

U: Is the river not very deep?

B: Not in some places. Didn't use to be. I know Dad used to cut logs and float them down the river. Yeah, I know that. I can't remember but very, very little of that. He used oxen; I know that. I remember being up there one time; that's just remembering it. I couldn't show you where it was or nothing. He was using the cant hook and pushing them in the river, and floating them. I don't remember where they floated them to. There were the old cane breaks and everything out there and all.

U: Did your dad ever run the ferry or just his brother?

B: I don't believe that Dad ever ran it actually. Old man Joe Harris is the one that was running it during my remembering time, mostly. No, wait a minute. There was one there before or after, Rufe? I don't remember that man though. Joe Harris is one; his family is scattered from yea to yonder. His youngest daughter is my step-mother.

I told you a story awhile ago. I told you Dad never did remarry again. (laughter) He married after I married, and that's the reason I never thought no more about it. I had honestly forgotten about it. I have a half-brother. Well, anyway she does live in Tupelo.

U: Is this Joe Harris's daughter?

B: Youngest one. No, not the youngest. Well anyway, she's one of them. She is about my age; she's younger than I am. I have their old telephone number, and I doubt that it's changed. She just grew up right there. Her daddy is the one that was around and about there so much. They were mixed in there with the Uithovens someway. Her mama was an Uithoven, I believe. Yeah, it would have been the old man's sister. Do you reckon you would want to call her?

U: What is her first name?

B: I'm fixing to give you her name and telephone number. She's married so many times I can't remember. One of the boys wrote this all down--the different ones that is scattered from yea to yonder. Josie Kennedy is how her name goes now. She's in Nettleton. She could give you quite a bit.

U: Did she grow up out there?

B: Yes, she did. She lived down there at the ferry with the old man. She lived round and about until she married. I had really forgotten about that.

U: Where was the house that they lived in down by the ferry?

B: I don't know. She'd have to tell you that, because I didn't know much about the Harrises until after she married Dad. She wasn't but sixteen years old and married a fifty. . . . There was a house full of children. A couple of the girls live there in Tupelo, but they wouldn't know much. They never lived around about out there.

U: Do you know if any of the Uithovens ever ran the Barton ferry?

B: No, I don't. If they did, that was before my time. We used to go back and forth across it. This aunt, that I'm talking about, lived in her own home over there until they sold out to the Air Force Base. Then she moved to Columbus. We used to go across the river, after I got up grown, to get muscodine. We'd go over there and gather a tub full in a day's time; that's all you needed for the whole family to can. I don't remember any of them running the ferry. They could have at some time or another; some of the older set could have.

U: Do you remember boats coming up the Tombigbee?

B: No. I wasn't here by that time. They had quit that. I don't know of anybody that could remember back to that, unless some of the families have kept up with things like when they stopped and all. I don't know of anybody. It's like I told you awhile ago. That Duke boy can give you more information. I'd never thought about him. He could give you more information even about me and my family than I can. (laughter) He knows all back about those times. When I was living with this aunt of mine, I lived right across the road from them. His younger sister and I are the same age.

U: Is she living?

B: No, Velma's dead now. He's got another sister. No, she's dead; she was a Wilson. I believe he's about the only one of the family left. He's got a family of his own there, quite a few of them. That was up on the county line though. That's classed as Vinton, but it is just about to the county line.

U: Did your aunt live near the Dukes then?

B: Yes, she was a Gibson.

U: What was her first name?

B: Betty. That would be known as the Gibson place, because that was Ned Gibson's homeplace. I don't remember any middle names. That's too much for me.

U: How was she your aunt?

B: My dad's sister. I went from her house to Penson, Tennessee to another sister of his, Molly Goodwin, when Aunt Betty died. She died when I was about five years old. I wasn't going to school. As I said, the whole family is gone now.

U: Do you remember what her house looked like?

B: Well, yes. It was about a five room house with a porch all the way across the front and a back porch. (laughter)

U: Was it a log house?

B: No, it was wood plank. I reckon it is still standing, if somebody else hasn't torn it down or done something. The last time I was out in there it was standing.

U: Was it right across the road from the Duke home?

B: Yes. The Duke's home sat way back off the road, and this house sat right closer to the road. You went right out of this house and in the Duke's gate and right on down to the Duke house.

U: If you were going from Vinton upriver, up the road, would it be on the left side or the right side, if you were going to Aberdeen?

B: If I was going to Aberdeen, it would be on the left side.

U: Did you ever hear anybody tell you any stories about steamboats?

B: No, I never did, because I don't think my people at that time were old enough to remember them. Dad may have been, but I don't know. If he did, he never said anything. As I said, I never was around him not close to him after I was big enough to be interested in anything like that. Well, I wasn't around anybody that could tell me that.

I really saw more of him after I married than I had practically all of my life. There was the two of us children. He kept my brother all the time. There were a lot of people in West Point that didn't even know I was his child. (laughter) I've had people tell me that after I grew up and married. They didn't even know Barney had another child. I said, "I reckon he did."

My mother's people go back just as far as West Point goes back. They were some of the founders in back of that. They owned about a whole one end of what is the town of West Point now, but all them are gone.

U: Did you ever hear of a Cogsdell Kennels?

B: Where were they supposed to be?

U: They are mentioned in a newspaper article in 1898. They are supposed to be out on the river there; it says it is run by the Cogsdell brothers.

B: Well, it would be on the river, but don't ask me to take you where that is. That is not at Bartons Ferry. They lived at that Bartons Ferry individually. Their daddy died when they was young; therefore, I never had a grandmother or grandfather on either side. That's the reason I can't go back that distance on anything. The old Cogsdell place, when the brothers and the sisters and all were together, was not at the ferry. The only way I could describe it from the way I know it is behind the Duke's home. It is right back down in the river bottom.

U: Is it close to the river?

B: Yes.

U: Did you ever know of a general store out there?

B: I know there was one out there, but I don't know as I ever actually heard where it was. It must have been in there somewhere in the vicinity of Bartons Ferry and Vinton. I know there was one out there, but I don't know exactly where it was.

U: Do you know anyone whose last name is Atkins?

B: No, I don't.

U: Do you know anyone named Dobson?

B: Yeah, but I don't know too much about them. The ones I knew have a daughter in West Point.

U: But you never knew any out by Bartons Ferry?

B: I didn't know them at that time. I knew them after they had moved between Bartons Ferry and West Point.

U: Do you remember any houses south of the Barton Ferry Road?

B: That's still standing?

U: Any that you remember being there.

B: I can tell you there is an old house place near where the Uithoven house is. I am going west across the woods now. I ain't going all the way around. A part of the Uithoven family lived over there in another house; it was just, you might as well say, a shack. You go out the front of the Uithoven house and a little bit to the left. There was a big tree at the side of the house. It had been built. . . . There was an old house place between there and. . . . I can't tell you where that comes out at over there either. Kellers lived there.

U: Kellers?

B: Yes. You got any Kellers down?

U: We knew they were related to the Uithovens.

B: That's right. Now don't you ask me to explain that kin to that family. Let's see. He had children; she had children; then they had children, and some of the children that they had didn't belong to him. They belonged to somebody else. (laughter) That's where the Keller comes in. That's Mrs. Uithoven's son. That's who she was before she married. Guise and Eldridge are not old man Uithoven's. They're his oldest son's children by her. That's the way the names are fixed up. Some of them were Uithovens, and some of them were Kellers, and some of them were Perkins.

U: Perkins, that is not a name I've ever heard.

B: No, Mary married a Perkins. She was a Keller. Nancy Uithoven was the oldest one. Mary and Tom Keller were brother and sister. There's a lot mixed up back in there. I was trying to study about either one. I don't know of any of the older crowd that's still living. Nancy or Mary either one could just about have given you the history.

U: Where was their house? Do you go across the road and out west from the Uithoven house?

B: Out through the woods. If you was to go back to the road like you was going to Vinton, you would go past Pinkie Lee Shirley's, and turn off to the right to the Keller house. Could Pinkie Lee Shirley give you very much?

U: Just a little. Her husband died last spring. She said that he was the one who knew.

B: His mama is dead, isn't she?

U: Yes.

B: His mama took care of me when I was little. I know she was way up in years the last time I saw them. I always went by and visited them when I went out to Bartons Ferry. Even if they were colored, they always thought a lot of me. Do they still live on the corner?

U: Yes.

B: She's been there ever since. . . . She could carry you on. She was way up in years. In fact, I need to think about the colored people out there.

U: Were there any houses between her house and the Barton Ferry landing?

B: There were. That's what I was telling you awhile ago. Do you know where her house is now? Well, you go right on down that road, and you come to the other turn that goes directly to Bartons Ferry. There used to be this log house that I was telling you about that set up there. It was log. I don't know how long it had been there. Then after you turn and go down towards Bartons Ferry, the house that my mother died in was on the right, where you still go in a gate to go down to the Uithoven house. There is an old house place there. You could see it, I guess, unless somebody else has bought it and done something else with it now.

U: Is it right there where the gate is?

B: Yes. There was an old house place on the right-hand side.

U: There is nothing standing there.

B: Oh, no.

U: So, as you are going down the road and the gate is on your left, it would be on the right?

B: Yes.

U: Whose house was that?

B: Dad's. That's what I said; my mother died there.

U: Do you know what that house looked like?

B: No.

U: Do you know what happened to it?

B: It burned.

U: When you were little?

B: Yes, I guess it did, because I was eighteen months old, when she died. Of course, I don't remember any of that. They are the only house places I know of around in that vicinity.

U: Was there ever an old house site just as you go through the gate?

B: Yeah, up on the left. There were just remnants there.

U: On the left?

B: Yeah. There is one there. Well, when you leave Pinkie Lee's, there was a road that turned off not very far down, to the right. That was where the Keller house sat. I don't know whether it is still standing there or not. This Keller house place then was between there and the Uithoven house or barn whatever it is over there. I don't know what it is. Those are the only old house places that I know of.

U: Have you ever heard of a Frank Andrews?

B: Yeah, but I don't know him personally, or anything like that. I do know of him. I don't know whether he is still living or not.

U: Did you know where he lived?

B: No, that's what I'm telling you about. Josie can give you names maybe and where people did live in the later years. They did know more people than I did. She remembers stuff like that. I haven't seen her in a good many years now.

U: Did you ever hear of a John Poss or a Poss family?

B: You mean at Bartons Ferry?

U: Or Vinton, anywhere in there.

B: No, I know of a John Poss family, but that is on the other side of West Point. I don't know whether they originated out there.

U: Did you ever hear of a Coltrane family?

B: Yes, ma'am. That's some more of my family. (laughter)

U: Are you related to everyone?

B: I don't know everyone you mention. She was a great aunt of mine.

U: Can you explain to me exactly how she was related to you?

B: My daddy's aunt, my great-aunt. I lived with her.

U: What was her first name? Or her husband's name?

B: Wait just a minute. She's not a Coltrane. Lord, this is mixed up again. Her name was Molly, Aunt Molly Coleman. She raised a girl--of course, there wasn't such a thing as adoption then--through school and all. The girl married a Coltrane, Will Coltrane. That's where the Coltranes come in. The girl was not actually kin to me, but that's how I get the Coltrane name in.

U: So, the girl she raised married a Coltrane?

B: Married Will Coltrane. They didn't live out there too many years, because they went to Nettleton. I don't know what address you've got on them now.

U: We don't have an address.

B: They did live on there at that farm for a good many years after she married, as long as Aunt Molly could live out there. But they sold out there and went to Nettleton. That's where they were living. I know Aunt Molly is dead, and I think that Will's dead. She's older than I am. Now whether his daddy. . . . I don't know where he come from. He may have been raised up there out there in that country; I don't know.

U: Where was the Coleman place? Your Aunt Molly's place?

B: I don't know whether I can tell you about that or not. I've got to come out of Aberdeen now. It is on the road coming from Aberdeen. Has anybody mentioned a little town named Darracott?

U: Yes.

B: Well, that's their town. Now if you have any idea where that is, coming out of Darracott it is going the opposite direction.

U: From Darracott to Aberdeen?

B: Yeah. Do you have any names in Darracott?

U: A few.

B: Any Barnetts?

U: Yes.

B: You know where that house is.

U: Yes.

B: That is an old big two-story house. Being as small as I was, I don't remember anything except the main ones that I knew. Then have you got any Browns?

U: Yes.

B: Dr. Brown's old place is next. Is that how you've got it listed?

U: I didn't know he was a doctor.

B: He was a veterinarian, I think. (laughter) Coming out of Darracott, he is on the right-hand side of the road, and she's on the left-hand. Her house is built right back off the road. Then the church is right on up there, too. I don't know whether it's still there or not.

U: Lebanon?

B: Yeah, there was two, one on one side of the road and one on the other. The one on the left-hand side is the one where the family is buried. My daddy is buried in West Point. Uncle Jim Cogsdell is the older brother who I've been trying to think of. He's buried over there in the old Bean Cemetery.

U: In which cemetery?

B: Bean Cemetery in the airport. I think they went around there to preserve that cemetery. His wife was a Bean and that was the Bean Cemetery. You know, they used to have family cemeteries. This Uncle Ned Gibson's place has an old cemetery on that. I can remember that as a child. It is back behind the house on the hills in there. It was not any of our people or anything. It's an old cemetery. That's where a lot of people are buried, in family cemeteries. I can't even tell you what family it was, because I wasn't big enough to know that much, but I do know it was over there. You have investigated a good many places, haven't you?

U: Little bits and pieces.

B: Do you know anything about the Howards? That would be in Vinton or in the Vinton vicinity.

U: Someone has talked to George Howard.

B: He was chancery clerk there in West Point. That's how I got my birth certificate for the social security. The school had burned and there was no school records. The house had burned and there was no Bible records. I studied and I studied, and all the older people that could really vouch for it were dead. I just happened to think about him. His brother, who is younger than him, was born when I was. The doctor went from our house to his house. That was Dr. Darracott. So, I called my daughter and told her, "Sis, I got to have some kind of something saying I was born. I don't know anybody anymore. You go up there and tell George Howard that I got to have some kind of a record for social security." She went up there and told George what I said. He said, "Well, just have a seat, and I'll have you one in a minute." He verified my age to that effect. His wife was a county nurse there for years, right after they were married.

U: You mentioned a school. Where did you go to school?

B: Darracott. My brother went to Vinton. I was mixed up about that awhile ago. I didn't go but one year out at Darracott.

U: Do you remember who the teacher was?

B: Oh, no. I remember where the schoolhouse sat.

U: Where's that?

B: Well, at the crossroads there used to be a store. I don't know whether there is anything like that there yet. Then on down the road going toward Vinton on the left-hand side was the schoolhouse, right practically in the corner. It was a two-room schoolhouse. Yeah, I did go to school there. I didn't get too much education anywhere, not like I should have. I got to the eighth grade.

U: Your brother went to the Vinton school?

B: I think he went one year, maybe longer than that. I don't know. Now, Flop can give you all of that. That's Lee Alton. Nobody calls him anything but Flop Duke, in all of his life. He had the jake leg. It's been that ever since. Yeah, he could tell you all about that, because they did go up there to school at Vinton.

U: Where was the school in Vinton?

B: Well, let me see. You know where Pinkie Lee's is?

U: Yes.

B: I got to straighten out my roads. When we was living in the Uithoven house, I believe it sits right up on the corner there somewhere. I cannot think of whether you turn and go to your right. Yeah, you do. It should be still standing; I don't know. It was then. It wasn't in such fine shape.

U: Is it near the Uithoven place?

B: It is out in that vicinity, yes. He can tell you all about where anything like that is.

U: Did you ever know any Footes?

B: I've heard them mentioned. No, I never knew any myself. There were some out in there, but I don't know.

U: Berrys?

B: Not out in there. I've never heard of them.

U: Keaton?

B: That's colored, isn't it?

U: Could be.

B: I know I heard the Keaton name, but I don't know them. There was another old family that lived up towards Vinton. I've been trying to think about them. I can't even think of those names. Do you have anymore names out in there?

U: Out by where you lived? Have you ever heard of Lucy Natcher?

B: Is that the way her name's pronounced?

U: Or Natchez?

B: Seems to me like that is the one I was trying to think of that lived up in the big old house. The main thing that I can remember about her. . . . Is she a Miss or a Mrs. the way you got it?

U: A Miss, I think.

B: Miss. That's her. She had a crippled boy with her. I can't remember what relation the boy was to her. He was badly deformed, and she carried him everywhere she went in the buggy. I can remember her visiting. I can tell you something else I remember, visiting her house one time. The cats ate on the table when we ate. I wasn't nothing but a little bitty something, but I didn't want no more to eat. (laughter) That's the truth. That's who it was. I don't think her house is still standing. Now, let me just study a minute. There is a road goes that way, and a road going up to the school route from Vinton. Her house was down below where the Vinton schoolhouse is on the left-hand side of the road. I know that stood there for a long time; whether it is still standing or not I don't know. It was in bad shape then. I really don't know where you get any of that family.

U: We don't know anyone else out there.

B: I don't think you will, because I know she lived by herself when I knew her, and she wasn't married. It had to be her brother, I reckon, or nephew or something. Couldn't be hers. Well, it could be too, but I don't think it was. I don't know.

U: Do you remember what that house looked like?

B: Vaguely. It was built kind of like my husband Travis said, but with a porch all the way around that ell. I don't remember the back of it.

U: Do you remember what it was like inside when you ate inside with the cats?

B: No, I don't, but it looked pretty shoddy to me, even as a kid. No, I don't remember much about that.

U: Were there any other houses near hers?

B: Yeah, there was one across the road. Hey, that's Andrews like you mentioned.

U: We don't know where he lives.

B: I don't know where he lives now either, but I believe that's who lived across the road from her, on the same side of the road that the schoolhouse was on.

U: Over near the cemetery?

B: From the schoolhouse, where is the cemetery for you?

U: What I was wondering was, if she lives across from the cemetery there, are there any other houses right there?

B: There is now I know, but whether there's an old house or not. . . . That house that I was thinking about is not right there. It's close to the school on the same side of the road as the school. I don't think it would be classed as a very old house.

U: Do you think the Andrews lived there?

B: I think so, at one time. I wouldn't be positive about it.

U: Did you ever hear of a man named Levi Hollins?

B: Levi Collins?

U: Hollins.

B: No, I never heard of him.

U: Did you ever hear of anyone whose last name was Trotter?

B: I remember some Trotters; I remember the Trotter name. I wouldn't know where they were.

U: Did you ever know any Wilsons?

B: Yeah, but I don't know much about them either, other than that one of the Duke girls married a Wilson who was from out in there. I couldn't tell you nothing about that; that's where Lee Alton comes in again. He'll be a lot more help to you than I ever would be. See he trapped all of his time. He could really give you definitely more what is along the river. Flop is that big pecan man in West Point. He and I are about the same age.

U: Did you ever know anyone whose last name was Watson?

B: Yeah, but now you're going somewhere else. You're going somewhere else besides Vinton with the ones I know. Don't ask me what that other little doolally place is. The Watsons have been in that one place for generations. Do you know the name of any more little towns besides Vinton?

U: Strong's?

B: Oh no, Strong's is in a different direction from where the Watsons live.

U: Do they live downriver?

B: Yeah, they'd have to because they are between West Point and Aberdeen. It is some kind of station. No, Strongs is right. Whites Station is what I'm thinking about. Whites Station is a community back over the same direction around about Vinton down in there. That is Strongs Station.

U: And that's where the Watsons lived?

B: That's where the Watsons lived.

U: Did you ever hear of anyone named Cox?

B: Where are they supposed to live, do you know?

U: Downriver from Bartons Ferry.

B: I don't know where this Cox family was originally from. I don't know any of them out there. No, I don't either, not out there. They did come from Cedar Bluff instead of out the other way.

U: When you lived out there, was there a church out there?

B: Not around Vinton anymore. I don't know whether there had been one or whether there wasn't. We used the schoolhouse. See, there wasn't anymore school out there.

U: Used the Vinton schoolhouse?

B: Yes. Sure did.

U: Did you ever hear of a blacksmith out there?

B: I think most all of the older people I can remember as a child practically did their own blacksmithing. I don't think there was a regular smith. Could have been; I don't know. They usually did what had to be done.

I really was suprised that you called. It just didn't dawn on me that somebody would bring up that I'd ever come from out in there. I knew that there was so many more people that would know more than I did.

U: Where did you get your mail out there?

B: West Point.

U: Did they bring it out and deliver it?

B: In a horse and a buggy. I remember that much, too. I remember we used to have to walk to get it. There was a slag place, and the mail carrier couldn't get through there sometimes because it would be up to his hubs. We'd have to walk down to the other hill over there and get the mail.

U: Is that when you lived on the Gibson place?

B: Yeah. Sure is. I think this always come out of West Point; I know Vinton does now by rural carrier.

U: Were there any little stores there or if you wanted to buy anything, did you have to go to West Point or Aberdeen?

B: There used to be a store up to Darracott or up towards Darracott between the Gibson's house and there, but going the other way and around there weren't any. They had to go to West Point, I reckon. Of course, from Darracott they went to Aberdeen mostly. We lived in another small house when we were with my daddy before he carried me to Tennessee. It was on the Duke's place, down below them. I know he had to haul feed from Aberdeen by ox. The roads were still that bad. I don't remember any stores at all at that time.

U: So, your dad had livestock. Did he farm?

B: No, and to be honest with you, he never did do no hard work. He made corn whiskey. It's nothing to be proud of, but the truth is the truth. That's about all he ever done now.

U: When you lived with your aunt at the Gibsons, did he farm?

B: Uncle Ned? Yeah, a small amount. There was just the two of them. They didn't have any children. He didn't have any family in that area.

U: Did you help in the house there?

B: I wasn't big enough to do much. She died when I was five. No, I didn't remember doing much there. Brother and I were both together during the time we lived with Aunt Betty. When he got to be school age, Dad sent him to Pheba to boarding school. I don't know where I was at that time. There is an awful lot of water around the bridge since then. That's the reason I said he always took care of brother. Half the time I didn't even know where he was.

U: Were there any doctors out in there?

B: Well, wasn't there Dr. George Darracott? Wasn't Darracott named for the Darracott family? That's who it was. I don't know which one it was. That was the one that brought me here, and Van Howard. I know that he brought both of us. He was the one who owned the store. I believe besides the doctoring, he and his wife ran the store. I never did go to Darracott too much when I was a kid. I don't remember going all that much.

U: In this list of names, I have a Lewis Cogsdell.

B: I never heard of him. They may go back in time.

U: They might be 1880s.

B: They might go back to my dad. As I told you, Thomas has gone back four generations the last I'd heard.

U: Sarah Cogsdell?

B: No.

U: Samuel Cogsdell?

B: No.

U: Narcissa Cogsdell?

B: I've heard that name, but I couldn't quote you on one of that. That would have been one of my grandmothers, I think, but I'm not sure.

U: Did you know someone who is just named N. T. Cogsdell? In a newspaper article, it says N. T. Cogsdell rides the mail.

B: I never heard none of that.

U: Molly Cogsdell?

B: Well, now I had two aunts named Molly; they were both Cogsdells, an aunt and a great-aunt.

U: One of them was one of your father's sisters?

B: Yeah, and one of them was his aunt. The great-aunt was married to a Richardson. The Molly Goodwin that I told you about awhile ago was the sister.

U: Mary Cogsdell?

B: Yeah, Aunt Mary was Great-aunt Molly. She was a Cogsdell, but she married a Richardson. In fact, I knew the two aunts.

U: James Cogsdell?

B: Yes, I got a half-brother; he's in Pennsylvania.

U: Daniel Cogsdell?

B: Yes, that was my dad's youngest brother, Dan.

U: Annie Cogsdell?

B: Yes, that's my first cousin, that I told you could possibly still be living in Columbus.

U: Was her father a Daniel, too?

B: Her father was Jim. I never did remember nothing except Jim. Now, I don't know whether it was just plain Jim or not.

U: Do you know a Mattie Cogsdell?

B: That was Uncle Dan's wife.

U: Is B. C. your dad?

B: Barney Churchill.

U: In one place in a newspaper article, it say, "Mrs. Thompson, a daughter of Mrs. Cogsdell." Do you know if any of your aunts were married to Thompsons? That's about 1900.

B: Aunt Molly did. I guess Mary Thompson would be that old. Let me study just a minute. Yes, that is Molly's daughter. That is the only Mary that I know. She is a first cousin. I had forgotten about her. She wasn't a Cogsdell, you know.

U: Have you ever heard of anyone by the last name of Ellis?

B: There is plenty of them around West Point going towards the Bartons Ferry. But now where they originated from. . . . They've been out in that section. Could have been them. I don't know. Of course, the old man's dead, but he's still got sons and all out there. They are all about as old as I am. I can't think of the old man's name, but there is Herman Ellis and I can't remember the other boy's name.

U: When you were little and you lived in the High-water house, how long did you live there?

B: I don't know.

U: Do you remember it at all?

B: No, ma'am.

U: Do you remember living in Barton as a child or were you too small?

B: I was too small to remember it as a child; I wasn't but eighteen months old. I don't even remember my mother. Of course, I would have been living in the house over across by the gate. As I said, as a child, I don't remember any of it. I lived with these aunts, the two sisters. One of them lived, where I told you between Darracott and there, and the other one lived in Tennessee.

I can tell you another thing. When you asked about the Thompson awhile ago, I had to stop and think because Aunt Molly was married twice. She first was a Thompson. I knew her husband and that's why I couldn't get it in my mind. She married a Goodwin when Mary Ellen was quite small. I never did know the other one at all. Mary Ellen did go by her name; I don't think that she ever was adopted.

U: Did you ever ride on the Barton ferry before you moved to Tennessee?

B: I imagine I did, because one of them lived on one side and one on the other side, but I don't know anything about it. I went to Aunt Betty's when my mama died, and I lived with her until I was five; then she died. Really some things around Darracott and all is much plainer to me than around Bartons Ferry.

U: We are talking about Dr. Uithoven. You said he is from Holland?

B: Yeah, originally.

U: Did his family come with him?

B: I don't know. He had three Uithovens that was really Uithovens. They were older. I don't know that much about it now. His first wife was a Dutch, too. He couldn't speak all that plain. He made brew all the time. He had sheep and goats out there.

The water was up, and somehow the sheep and the goats got in the brew, and they all got drunk. This bluff there is right below where the house is. If you travel it much, you'll know. They was all jumping off in the river. They'd get to the end of this bluff, and they'd jump off. Well, the water was up where the gravel bar was and all. That's where they was jumping. Nancy was out there swimming and trying to get them out. It was just as cold as Billy Heck. Dr. Uithoven would go to tell it and he would say, "And, you know, my sheelups and my goalops they everyone got in my brew. The damn fools they was jumping out in the river."

I did have a pair of Dutch shoes that he gave me. I took such good care of them and everything. When Mabel got in high school--that's the only daughter I got--we loaned and loaned and loaned those shoes out to different ones. The last time I loaned them out, I couldn't get them back. They were wooden shoes that had been worn; they came from Holland.

U: Was Nancy Uithoven one of his daughters?

B: Yes, she was a daughter. I guess she had just grown up a tomboy all her life. They lived right there on the river. She could swim like a fish. She liked to have had pneumonia, though. I'm telling you that it was rough water trying to get them out. I think she saved all of them but one. She said, "You reckon that damn fool was too drunk to know which way to go." Oh, they were rough customers. I'm not joking. I heard that tale way back before I married.

My daddy used to come after me once in a great while and take me out there in the country with him. We'd stay somewhere like that. She married. . . . Who did she marry? A Harvell, I believe, or something. She didn't marry until she was up a pretty good age. I went out there one night to spend the night with them. Dad carried me to a square dance out there at the Uithovens. They used to have them just about every weekend out around Vinton. I went to a square dance, and he said it was so late that we would just go over and

spend the night with Nancy and them. Nancy and her husband lived in the Keller place west of the Uithoven house. Her husband was in the corn whiskey business.

They had a pet coon, and he stayed in the house at night. I was scared of him, too. He couldn't get loose, I don't reckon, because he never did. We had no more than got into bed than here come the law. Now that is just about what went on out around in that vicinity. That's just about what everybody done. I didn't know it at that time. Didn't know it really and truly until I got quite a bit older. Anyway, here they come in searching and going on, and running and rucking around. One of them was standing right there at the foot of my bed asking me did I live there and all this. I was scared to say anything. It scared me so bad. That durn coon got up. He didn't stand there long until the coon was up in his pockets and all around and about. He went on out. When they got through, I got up and put my clothes on and said, "You are going to take me home regardless of what time of night it is." That is just about what everybody, I guess, did out in there.

U: Square dances? Where did they have the square dances?

B: Different homes. I've been to square dances in the Uithoven house before I ever lived there. The boys and the whole Uithoven family was around in there. I was quite young, but I learned how to dance when I was about fifteen, maybe a little younger. We used to take them all in.

U: Do you remember who any one of the callers were?

B: I did remember. Seemed to me like he was a Wilson, the one that called most of them out in there. I know he was. One of the older Duke girls was married to him. Oh, I used to love to square dance.

They tried bringing that back, a good many years back. It was when I was living in West Point. My kids were all small. I used to go to them to help out to teach some of the younger ones. They used to have them at the American Legion there in West Point. I danced with all the older men. I was lucky. I didn't have to get a greenhorn very often. They'd come and get me because they said I was the only one out there that could follow them. Back in Dad's young days, old man Gresham was playing for the square dances. He and Dad used to go horseback and play for them back in his young days.

Well, have you all got Waverly, too? Well, I'll tell you about it now, because I'm not in danger of getting in any trouble. There were two or three of us girls--I was raised with first cousins of mine--who went out there one day to go through the old mansion. Mrs. Adair wasn't at home; it was still boarded up. That was just a short time after the last one died. It got so bad with everybody carrying everything off. We couldn't get in. I got up on some of them's shoulders and crawled in the window. We looked it over good. That was before it was ever open to the public.

U: Was it in pretty good shape?

B: It is now. It has been restored.

U: But when you saw it?

B: Oh, yeah, except the third floor was condemned. If anybody went up on the third floor, they wasn't supposed to. To me, that stairway was the prettiest thing. They still had the piano in there then with pure ivory keys, but people that would go through it would take the ivory off of the keys. I done even forgot who owned it. The Banks in Columbus has had descendants somewhere from there. The shoes were still sitting under the side of the bed, the way the old man left them. Those beds were gorgeous; I'm not joking. That is the only thing that I ever done that you might call breaking in or doing something I didn't have any business doing. I thought that was bad enough that I didn't want anybody to know about it. That's the only big old hogshead I ever have seen in my life. You know what that is--great big wash pots.

TB: Must be seven feet in diameter across the top.

B: That's what they used to kill hogs with. They moved everything out that was left that there was any value to, before they started restoring it. It was just closed up and boarded up for a long time. I thought at one time they weren't ever going to restore it, but they did finally.

U: Are there overflowing wells out by Barton?

B: Yes. There is one there at the Uithoven house. It surely hasn't run dry.

U: Where is it?

B: Well, do you know where the dirt road is?

U: Yes.

B: Do you step a fence after you come through at the big gate?

U: No.

B: Well anyhow, it is just right down in the hollow.

U: Yes. There is one down in the hollow before you get to the house.

B: It is still running, isn't it?

U: No.

B: I don't understand that. Up there where I told you that log house was, there was one. That was the clearest prettiest water, no iron,

no nothing. It had the best water I've ever tasted anywhere, and they are all about the same way.

U: Was the well behind the Uithoven house not an overflowing well?

B: Oh, lord no. That was a dug well.

U: Do you remember what it was lined with?

B: Nothing. They didn't line them back then.

TB: It is clay dirt; they dig them in that.

B: I don't believe it ever will be filled up. It took two check reigns to put a tub down in that one then, as many years as it's been sitting there, to get that cat out of it. Those check reigns are how long?

TB: Are you talking about wagon lines?

B: Yes, sir.

TB: Oh, they'd be I guess say thirty feet both of them together.

B: Well, we hooked them.

TB: Maybe thirty-six. They'd probably be eighteen feet long each.

B: We hooked two together to get that tub down in there to get the cat out. (laughter)

U: Well, I can't think of anything else. I'd like to thank you very much for talking to me.

B: Oh, you are quite welcome about that. Brought up things though that I hadn't thought of in years.

TB: You'll dream about a dozen or two more tonight, I guess.

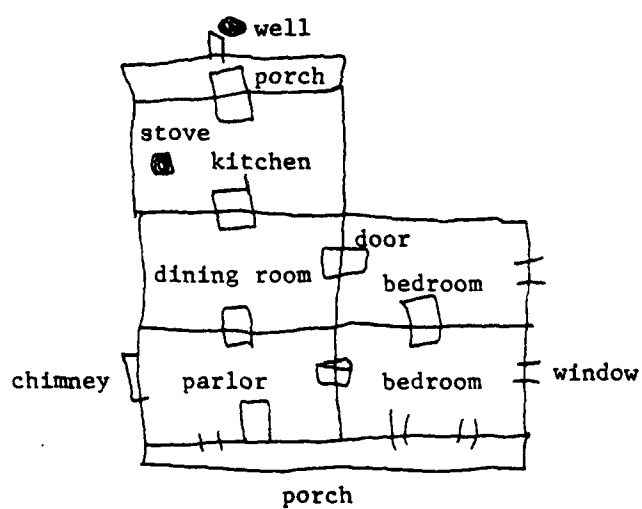


Figure 8. Floor plan of the Ned Gibson house. Drawing by Hattie Box.

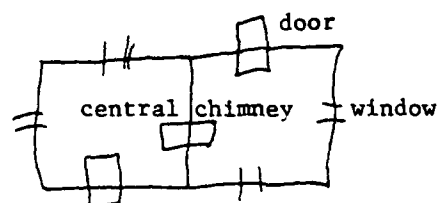


Figure 9. Floor plan of the High Water-Montgomery house. Drawing by Hattie Box.

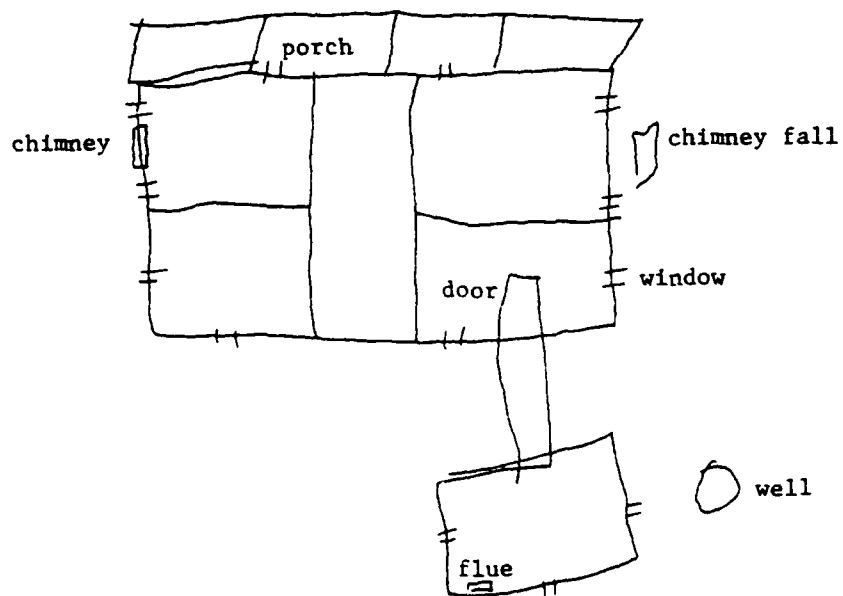


Figure 10. Floor plan of Cedar Oaks. Drawing by Hattie Box.

THTP - Oral History Interview OH 128
An interview with
Ethel Watson Wallace

conducted and edited by
Peggy Uland Anderson



Ethel Wallace was born in West Point, Mississippi on July 28, 1918 and has lived most of her life in Strong, Mississippi. She is the daughter of Henry Watson II who owned the site of Vinton and land near the site of Colbert. She has learned a great deal about Vinton by listening to the stories that her father and other older members of the community told her. Mrs. Wallace's strong sense of family tradition and her family's ties to the Vinton, Barton, and Colbert areas, her interest in history, and her personal recollections have provided a valuable source of information.

This interview with Mrs. Wallace was conducted in her home by Peggy U. Anderson on March 7, 1980.

U: This is an interview with Ethel Watson Wallace for the Tombigbee Historic Townsites Project by Peggy Uland at Mrs. Wallace's home on March 5, 1980. Her address is Route 4, Box 293, Aberdeen, Mississippi. Her telephone number is 369-2355.

Mrs. Wallace, could you tell me when and where you were born?

W: Do you want parents' names?

U: Yes.

W: I was the youngest daughter of Henry Duke Watson, Jr. and Ethel Arachne Smith Watson. I was born July 28, 1918, and I was the first of the four children to be born in a hospital. The hospital is a home that's still in existence in West Point. I believe it's 628 East Main Street; the house is still there in good repair. So, I was one of the privileged to be born in a hospital.

Of course, I have lived all of my life here in the Strong Community, with the exception of about three years that I worked for the Missouri Extension Service until I married. My mother was alone; my father had died in 1938, and she was farming by herself. So, my husband decided that we were going to try our hand at farming. That was thirty-nine years ago, and we are still here.

The oldest member of my family was Henry Duke Watson III. He died in 1975. I have a sister, Mrs. Alice Louise Watson Tucker, who lives in Canton, Mississippi. Another sister is at Palmetto, Florida, Stella Watson Courtney; her nickname is "Bill." I had a younger brother, Kirby Conrad, who only lived three weeks; he died from some type of pulmonary condition.

U: Could you tell me a little bit about your childhood?

W: I was the fourth child. I think my mother gave me to my father; I followed him every step. He'd ride the field on one horse, and I'd ride the other one and tag along behind him. He was a big fox hunter, and I have fox hunted many nights all down through the woods along the river with just a group of men. He would always take me along, but I knew better than to ever say I was tired because I'd never get to go again. So, I really tramped the woods all through there. They would have these huge fox hunts. Oh, they'd call those dogs and talk to them. That was the biggest thrill of my life, to get to go fox hunting with them. Well, because the house is here, of course, I've always lived in the shadow of the little church next door, which is a Methodist church. I just remember it being built; my father was in charge of building the church, and I remember him hiring the labor. Before this church was in its present location, there were two other locations. First it was by the cemetery which is over here behind the house. Then it was moved a little to the

east, and then back to the present location. Of course, I've never known any other church except this little country church which we all love.

U: Does it have a name?

W: Yes, Strong's Methodist Church. We made the mistake of changing the name. It was Paine's Memorial. There was a list of members that you brought out. But they changed it because there was a Negro or black Paine's Chapel, and they got them confused so often. So they changed this to Strong's; now it is Strong's First Methodist. We were very fortunate to keep this little country church going. It's gone through some hard times, but our membership now is up and growing. We hope we can stay that way.

As far as going to school, there was a little school out here in the neighborhood which is just south of the house. The older brothers and sisters went to this little country school. But by the time I was old enough to go to school, they were sending them into West Point in Model T automobiles. Several of the neighbors had cars and they were sending them in. So me, being the youngest, they just started me in West Point. I think I really got cheated of not getting to go to the little country school, because the neighbors would tell such interesting tales about it. They had some good teachers out here, and the families in the neighborhood had to keep the teachers in the winter.

U: Oh, they boarded them?

W: They boarded them. Of course, I've just heard those tales; I don't remember that much about them, but I've heard them tell about each family. They stayed three months apiece, I think, around with the different families. I went to West Point through elementary and junior high. Then in 1932, when the Depression hit, the older members had graduated. They had gone on off to college, and Daddy and Mama had three in college when the Depression hit. I was still in junior high school. At that time, they consolidated the Aberdeen Separate School District and started running buses. So, they put us on the bus then because they couldn't pay for a car and sent us to West Point. I completed my high school education in Aberdeen.

In 1936 I went to Mississippi State College for Women which is Mississippi University for Women now. The young people today do not know what rules are; we had navy blue uniforms for everyday and white for dress. The navy blue uniforms our freshman year were solid navy. There were no socks; we had to wear stockings. When we went to town, we had to wear hats. On Sunday we could wear a white dress. That was our dress uniform. Then our sophomore year, we wore a navy dress with a little white trim on our collar. Our junior year, we wore a white collar with a little navy trim, and our senior year we could wear a white collar. We thought that was the most wonderful thing in the world.

Oh, you've never heard of such strict rules. They were so strict--no smoking. Of course, we hid under the beds and smoked. My sophomore year they start letting them have smoking rooms, and we could wear bobby socks at that time. (laughter) There was no dancing, but in my junior year they let the students have their first dance. I have an article here from the Commercial Appeal out of Memphis with the headline, "W Girls Do The Big Apple." That was the dance of that year. I finished in three and a half years. I went to State two summers.

I went to southeast Missouri as home demonstration agent because the girls from Mississippi knew more about southeast Missouri than some that live in Missouri. That's where I met my husband at Charleston, Missouri and we were married. I brought him home with me when we decided to farm.

In 1956 I accepted a job as a social studies teacher in the Aberdeen Separate System. After a few years, I changed to teaching science in the junior high. I have a lifetime teacher's certificate which allows me to teach any subject in grades seven through twelve. My teaching was most rewarding. I benefited from the association with youth more than they benefited. I loved each student.

I had the experience of being in one of the first schools in Mississippi where integration was forced. It was an experience. We first had integration under freedom of choice and later total integration. In 1970, I transferred to Oak Hill Academy in West Point. Due to my obligations at home, I resigned in 1975.

We have two daughters, Margaret Lynn Wallace, who is Mrs. Ronald Teffeteller, and Ethel Bernice. We call her "Bunny;" she's Mrs. John Savage. She lives at Pascagoula, Mississippi. Lynn lives in Aberdeen and has two boys, Ron and Charlie. Ron is sixteen and Charlie is twelve. Lynn works for the Aberdeen school system. Bunny is in Pascagoula. She has taught in the elementary school there for thirteen years. She has a son, Casey Randel, who is seven, and Leslie Lynn who is two. We wouldn't take anything in the world for our girls. They just have meant so much to us.

U: Is this your family home that you live in here? Is this where you grew up?

W: Yes, my mother and father started to build this house in 1908 after they married, and they moved in in 1909. So, I have been here most of my life. Some of the furniture is the original furniture. After we decided to farm, my mother told the other children, "Now, you get what you want. Don't come back." So they did. They got what they wanted; they left the old big beds that none of them could use. So the other children have some of the other furniture that was in the house. We've added to it and drug things out of the attic and refinished them. But this is the house all of us grew up in. Many happy times have been had here. This was the gathering place for all of the aunts and uncles because none of us ever wanted to leave home at Christmastime or holidays. So Mama had to feed all the kin. (laughter) This has really been a happy home.

Of course, our father died prematurely at forty-nine, but many people remember him now as being a friend of the young people. He built a camp on the land that you're excavating now at Vinton; he called it the Linger Longer Lodge. He entertained each one of us and our friends two weeks at a time. That's probably part of the reason he died young. Now, we just had a grand time, and people right now talk about going to Linger Longer. There's a camp there now; I'm sure it's still there.

U: Where is that exactly?

W: It's on the west bank of the Tombigbee, where the Buttahatchie comes into the Tombigbee; it's right behind the Trotter's house, over there in the Vinton community.

U: There's a road that leads into that?

W: Yes, there's a road which crosses the little creek down in there. He sold it. Now, we were talking about the Depression. He sold that to Mr. C. C. Clark in West Point who had the Coca-Cola plant. Then, we moved south and we had a camp down there. Doctor Henry Watson in Aberdeen had that little camp, and he has recently turned that over, I think, to the Corps of Engineers. This will be included in a recreation area.

U: That is the one that's on the southern road that goes past the Trotter house?

W: Yes. The other was a much larger house. That camp was put up by a bunch of boys that just went in there and built it, and camped there. But after Daddy sold the one to the north, then we started camping down there.

U: Do you know who built that road up to that northern camphouse along the bluff?

W: Monroe County used the gravel from the river to build county roads. Later the gravel was used to construct Highway 45 Alternate.

U: Do you know about when that was?

W: Yes, it was about 1939 or 1940. My earliest memory of camping was south of Vinton on what we call the Cox's place. The cabin was on a hill overlooking Colbert. We all loved to camp. It was in a log cabin. We would go down there and stay in it and walk down to the river where I assume that the Indians forded the river. That's where we would swim because there was a gravel bar there. Now that's my earliest memory. I would go up in this old log cabin and go to sleep. I wouldn't do it now for anything. There were lizards crawling around. (laughter) The cabin was there for several years. The old pear trees were still there around that old cabin.

U: Can you tell me what that cabin looked like? Was it one room?

W: It was one room with a kitchen, and then they used a tent or two outside for the men to stay in. The women stayed in the cabin. Then the next summer after that, he built the camp that I was talking about that we called Linger Longer.

U: Do you know whose cabin that was? Had that log house been there for a long time?

W: I don't have any idea, whether it was. . . . Evidently he did not use it for a Negro cabin because there wasn't any there then. Of course, there were several cabins on that place that we called the Cox place. See, my grandfather moved from Columbus to Vinton and lived in the Trotter house. We called that the Miller place; then down below there, which would be where Colbert was, we called that the Cox place. I assume that's who he bought the land from.

There's an old house site on this Cox place where the well was drilled out of cypress log; the casing is out of cypress. They tell me that the slaves drilled through that cypress casing; how I wouldn't know. Now the well was still overflowing, as an artesian well, until the plant over at Hamilton started using so much water, and those overflows went dry.

U: What plant is that?

W: The Kerr-McGee, is that the name of it?

U: Yeah.

W: They started those huge wells they used, and all of the overflows on the west side of the river had to have pumps put in them. You can still see the old casing there. Water dribbles out of it a little bit. That's the old Cox house site.

U: Was there a house standing there?

W: Yes. A house was standing there. You can see the old crepe myrtles and rose bushes are still there. I was up there the other day; my husband feeds his cows up on the hill of this old house site. That's the place where there is a legend of gold being buried.

U: Could you tell me that story again?

W: Of course, it's all just pure hearsay. When this Mr. J. J. Cox and his wife Louise M. Cox sold my grandfather the place, he wanted to reserve rights so that if this gold was ever found, they would get it; Grandfather refused. He said, "No!" He said that when he bought the place, he wanted it from heaven to hell. For years, as the story goes, Mr. Cox and his daughter lived in this house. When they heard that the Union soldiers were coming down the Darracott Road, he buried two churns of silver or gold coins. Then he put his table silver under the chimney. Well, his daughter had gone across to where the Dragoos live today. There was an old Dr.

Dukeminier home there. He didn't tell her where he put the churns. Later on, he died before he told her. In my memory, for years you would go and there would be huge holes dug around the house site. People were in there looking for the gold.

U: Around the house?

W: Around the house. Later on my father built a cabin on the hill for Negroes to live in, for the labor on the farm. One morning Clemmy found that somebody had been in there digging out in her garden site, and she found some old dimes. So, I assume that if it was there, it has been found.

We went with a metal finder and dug up trace chains and had more fun, but I like to have dug the men to death. (laughter)

U: Do you know Clemmy's last name?

W: Let me see. Samson and Clemmy. Oh, I should know. Samson was the one Mama was talking about that wrote the song. They lived down there, and they cooked up at the camp. Clemmy Moore. She had one of those dimes with a hole in it that she wore around her ankle.

This house site would have been part. . . . Or would it have come later than Colbert?

U: We don't know when the Cox place originally would have been. Was the main house with the well still standing in your memory?

W: No. I don't know what happened to that house--whether it burned or was torn down or what. But my first memory of that was a cabin on that hillside.

U: It's standing in the same place as the other house?

W: Yes, and the old cypress trees and the old cedar trees, and even the old scuppernong vines are still there. They were around the old house. Now, I don't know what happened to that.

U: Where is that cypress well, the artesian well, in relation to where the house would have stood?

W: Well, it's in a very unsanitary place according to today's standards. It's down a slope down from the house.

U: Which direction?

W: To the north of the house. We have had picnics all around there, but really, as far as you can see, all the water would drain right into the well. I would like to get it drilled out and see if we can get it to overflowing again. I doubt it though because none of them are overflowing. If we put a new casing in or something, maybe it would. This old house site overlooks the bottom that my

husband farms. The river has been flooding so much more in the last few years and that bottom will get under water when the river is high. It doesn't come from the river; it comes from that creek to the south of it. For years, I never remember that river flooding but about twice. But in the last few years, of course, it has; that's from silt and all this filling in.

U: Is this house site that's on a hill north or south of the Willis Branch?

W: It's to the west of Willis Branch.

U: Oh, it's to the west?

W: To the west. What we call the "sand field" was right where we found those Indian heads and this rock that I was showing you. That's where the gravel pit is now today. Now they used to grow beautiful melons and fruit down in there. I remember that the different ones who stayed in Summer's camp would always use a little piece for a watermelon patch. It was good trucking. Now, over where they farm the bottom it's more of a heavier type soil.

Now this old man, Albert Sims, who used to live down in the sandy land--he hasn't been dead but a few years--had to move up here because one of the law officers kept arresting him for getting drunk. Daddy had to get him out of jail so much he just moved him up in the prairie. We call this the prairie and that the sandy land. Of course, nobody knows what I mean when I talk about the sandy land, but that's the way he spoke of it. I believe the law officer was named Willie Wilson.

Albert Sims said he remembered when there was not a pine tree, or a tree on the Cox place between the gate where the pavement ends and the river. All of that was in cultivation, but that's the reason erosion took place. They just cleared it off. It is amazing to me how these older ones got all of this land cleared. I guess they did it with slave labor or burned it. I don't know.

Getting back to talking about the hunting, every year up on the Vinton place where the Vinton community is, they would go in there and have huge rabbit hunts. They burned these farms; that's another thing. They would all line up and hunt the rabbits. Of course, we know now that it is strictly against all the rules to burn off land, but they would go in and set these fires. They would kill the rabbits as they would come out from the fire. They'd have the biggest feast and brunswick stew you've ever seen. All the neighbors took part.

U: That was on the Vinton place?

W: Yes, but it was on the west side of the road. They never burned on the east side. They had so much sage grass they'd burn it off; getting it ready for the next year. They thought they were doing

right. They were taking the fertility from the soil; we know better than that now.

U: You said your grandfather bought the Cox place. Do you know if he ever lived down there?

W: No, he lived up on the Vinton place. He owned about twelve hundred acres down there and twelve hundred up here. When my father married, he stayed down there at Vinton, and my father built this house and lived here at Strong. He continued to farm that as long as he lived.

My father had a brother, Julian, who when he was six he was. . . . They assume now that it was polio, but then they didn't know what it was. He was crippled and afflicted for the rest of his life. He never married. So when my grandfather died, he left his land to Julian and my father. The land on the river was considered Julian's. He outlived his father and brother. That's the reason we four children were the only heirs. So through mutual agreement, my brother Henry III, took the Vinton place and the three daughters took the Cox place. Since then, Charlie and I have bought the other two sisters' part because it was so split up; that's how that happens to be ours. Then at my brother's death, his four children have where the Vinton community is.

U: Do you know when your grandfather moved into the Vinton area?

W: He was born in Knoxville, Tennessee. Why he was born in Knoxville, Tennessee, I do not know. They were considered Yankees. They came in here in 1848. I cannot understand; I cannot find out why he was born in Knoxville unless they were passing through when they moved to the Columbus area. Over here on Highway 45 Alternate just where you turn off at the Strong sign is the land and part of the old home that was first settled by his family. He lived his early married life in Columbus. He moved to the Trotter's house before he bought this Cox place. He did not buy the Cox place until 1890. The deed shows 1890. He was in the other house before then; I'm not sure exactly what date. I believe he moved into the Trotter house between 1885 and 1890. I looked all of this up when the Corp of Engineers were taking the easement off of our place. I really got the facts on it; I'm sure it's in the courthouse in West Point. He bought this place from Mr. Cox, and the story goes that he paid for this six hundred and something acres the first year growing Irish potatoes.

U: Yeah?

W: Yes. You had something there in an article about watermelons. That land was not considered as good for cotton as it was up in the prairie. That's true of so much of the land across the river. Until commercial fertilizer came in, it was not considered good for cotton. The prairie could grow it without fertilizer. Since then the sandy land has come into its own. Really it is better than the

prairie sometimes, if you apply the right fertilizer. He used that more for the trucking and fruit.

U: You mentioned that they called it the Miller house. Is that how your father. . . ?

W: He always spoke of that place at Vinton as the Miller place. You had the old deeds here; we saw where it was transferred. Now that probably could tell us what day he moved. I don't know the Millers. I remember the name being on the deeds. Cader B. Keaton and his wife Mary S. deeded the place to R. G. Miller in 1853.

U: But that was how he always talked about it?

W: Yes. I remember there was a Mr. Ben Bradley that lived over here to the east of us. He lived to be ninety-eight. He would tell me about walking to school, and the school was right by the Vinton cemetery, not where people think the Vinton school was recently. He would walk down there to the Miller place. He called it the Miller place, too. I just assumed that Miller must have bought it from Trotter, and then my grandfather bought it from Miller. I'm not sure about that. The deeds would probably tell us; I don't know whether those would, because I don't know whether they are in order or not.

U: Do you remember any stories about a general store in the Vinton community?

W: Yes, I remember the old store itself, being there. It was a two-story building. I assumed it was used as a stagecoach stop. It seems to me there were two rooms on the first floor and a small room that must have been a storage room or a kitchen on the side. There were two rooms on the top floor. At the time of my memory, it was used for a cabin. The labor, the hands, were living in it. There was a brick walk that went from the present road up to that cabin. Out behind it, there were lots of plum trees; I remember that.

That's another thing. That whole entire country down there was absolutely covered with wild plums, yellow plums and red plums. They'd make the best plum jelly. I don't know what has happened to all of the plums. There's a few plum bushes, but you don't have those huge thickets like you used to where you could just go and get them by the bucketsful. Did we ever decide whether the old account book was from the store or not?

U: No, we need to look at that some more.

W: I've got it wrapped up in towels because it is so dirty. I have an idea that that last part may have not been during the Trotter period. That was when my grandfather lived there. I've asked about that Howard. "Did he ever live up here at Strong?" They said, "No, he did not." No one seemed to know anything about him.

U: If it is the right Howard, there is a Howard who was postmaster in that general store in Vinton at about the turn of the century.

W: I believe this book may have been then. That's about the time it would have been. I believe the back of that one account book was at another time. Now where the other one came from I haven't any idea. In fact, I haven't looked at them since you left here.

Now the road that we went from the Strong community to the Vinton community on is not where the present road is today. We would go over here on the top of what we call the Therrel place and go through the Corncob¹ community, which was a black community. We'd go down to an old iron bridge by the last Vinton School to the Trotter house and the Barton's Ferry Road. This present road was built later. I remember that we'd go through there on horseback. There's a hill over there that's so steep that the first automobiles couldn't go up it. We'd have to help push it up in the least little rain. We wouldn't get up there on a day like today. I really feel like I've got a little root in one place and another one up here in this one. Of course, we've been so closely tied through the years. By this I mean my roots are deep in the Strong community and the Vinton/Barton Ferry communities.

When I hear of these that have been off to cities and places all over the world, I feel like I've lived a mighty dull life, but still I think I've lived a mighty exciting life, too. You see, they feel right sorry for us that have stayed here all through the years. (laughter) There's an advantage in it, too, because I really know the ties so much better than these that have been off.

U: When you remember the general store as a house, which way did it face?

W: It faced south and the side was to the present road, which I assume was the road or the trail or whatever they called it. Now, the trail going to the river, where they put the cotton on the river, went behind the store and you can still see signs of it.

U: To the north side?

W: To the north, back of what I remember is the back of the store. It did not cross that creek; we were talking about the other road crossing the creek. It went down, and you can still see where the tracks went. They went on down in a low. I assume that's where they forded. . . . They couldn't have forded the river if it was like it is now because it's too deep right there. But they must have put the cotton or whatever they were shipping on boats right there. The old road hit the river just north of Dr. Henry Watson's camp.

U: So that goes in back of Trotter's?

¹Also known as Concob.

- W: Back of the Trotter's. Now, the Trotter house was to the east of the store. Down beside it, there was a big orchard and the well was to the west of the Trotter house. I think we have described this Trotter house to you.
- U: Yes, your mother had, but I'd like for you to describe it, too. You said that the general store had sort of a shed room or a kitchen off of it. Which end was that on?
- W: That was to the east.
- U: Was it attached to the building?
- W: It was attached; it was a small room. No, I don't believe it was added later, because it had the same appearance as the others. It could have been a storeroom for something.
- Now, these names that are in this account book would probably give some indication whether it was the right account book or not. My father had a store here at Strong's, later. I thought maybe this Van Howard had worked for him here. But different ones that had been in connection with him said that he never lived at Strong.
- U: Was that building wood frame?
- W: Yes, clapboard. If it had ever been painted, it would have been very much like this house. It was just gray.
- U: Did it have windows?
- W: Yes, it had windows. I don't believe it had screens. See, it is hard for us to realize that screens have just been in such a short time--in your lifetime a long time. I don't remember ever not having screens, but my mother does. She said that while they would eat, they would have somebody to fan the flies away--but no screens.
- I don't remember when this building was torn down. My husband did not come down here until 1941, and he remembers the building. So, it was there after he was in here farming.
- U: Did it stand off of the ground?
- W: Yes, it was built, I would say, about a foot and a half high on some type of brick pillars. It seems to me that in your excavation you'll find some of the brick.
- U: We should.
- W: Do you know whether they have or not?
- U: They haven't started in that area yet. Was it on a little knoll or a flat place?

W: Yes, it was a little knoll. I can go there and show you exactly where it was. (laughter) You won't have to find that.

U: Well actually, that would be helpful.

W: I don't think the steps. . . . The brick didn't go down to the road; I think they had just worn steps in the ditch bank. The old Trotter house had a brick walk going up to the south door of it.

U: So the brick walk that came out of the front door would come south and then did it turn?

W: The house was long. It ran north and south. The front could have been originally towards this north road that I remember going behind it that went on to the river. But right now I can just see a blank on that west side. The door and the porch and all were on the south side. Now, it is possible that that road could have changed and gone in front of it at first. In my memory, there was no road there; you could just see the sign of where it had been. The road that they used in my memory went in where the present gate is. That's the road that I remember using.

U: So the brick walk would come out of the front door then?

W: It made a curve and came down to the west, down to the present road. The cemetery was just across the road from it. The Masonic Hall was just to the north of that. Church services were held on the first floor and the Masons used the second floor.

U: Just on the edge of the cemetery?

W: Where there's a pool today.

U: Oh, would it be under the same place that the pool was?

W: I assume that it would. The school was close by, but I don't know where the Miller house was. There is an Indian mound over there on that Miller place, where a good many Indian heads have been found. I really don't know where that is. The first house I remember on that place was down to the south of the cemetery. It was a dogtrot log cabin.

U: This is on the west side of the road?

W: It was used as a cabin in my memory, but now whether someone lived there before, I don't know. I really don't know whether it was a part of an old house.

U: Do you know who lived there in the cabin when you remember it?

W: Mattie . . . what was Mattie's name? Mattie Bennett. It's not Bennett. I can't think of the last name. Mama would know.

U: Where was that exactly?

W: Oh, it's just off the bend. There's a road going back into the woods. It was a log cabin. You know where the house is down at the south end of that place where James Watson lives?

U: Yes.

W: It was to the north of that.

U: His is a brick house.

W: Yes. There's a house there, and there was a little sawmill up in there at one time.

U: Oh, there was?

W: That old cabin, I guess, is gone, but it hasn't been gone too long, I don't think. Most of these old cabins just decayed after the labor left.

U: The house and the sawmill would have been behind James' house, west of it?

W: To the north.

U: To the north?

W: To the north, but it sat back from the road some. Mitchell Bennett was Mattie's husband's name. Eddie was her son. Seems to me like Bennett was the last name, but I'm not sure of that. It would be in some of these records, I'm sure, because they lived there forever. This Eddie works over at State College now, but not as a professor. I think he works on the farm over there. They were really faithful. I wouldn't know how many families lived on the two places. The blacks would sharecrop. There was a cabin on nearly every hillside on the Cox place. The Cox place was considered at that time a better farmplace as far as cotton was concerned.

In my memory, it had gotten where it was nearly all cotton. My father had cows, and he had cotton. After World War I, the cattle market just went to nothing. It nearly broke him. So he went nearly all to cotton after then which was bad because he needed more than one crop. He had registered Herefords up until then, and he would move them from there up here. In the winter he would bring them up to the prairie to feed them and leave them down in the sandy land in the summer.

U: Were there any trees or fruit trees around that store?²

W: I remember an apricot tree, one of the few apricot trees I have ever seen produce. They were not cared for in my time in my memory;

² Interviewee responds about the Trotter house.

they were just there and several pear trees, and old apple trees. Up behind the house, up to the east in the old garden site, there were peach trees left up in there. Now what's happened to the old pear . . . usually pear trees last forever. You just put those out especially those old Keefers.

Now down on this Cox place, there's a pear tree there; I wouldn't guess how old it is, or who put it out because I have no idea. There's an old apple tree, and apple trees don't usually last that long. We sold a lot the other day and this man was so tickled because he got the old apple tree. There's not that many, but it will have a beautiful apple on it. It is possible that some of the hands--they called them hands because they worked for them--put that apple tree out. Still, not many of them last that long, even then.

That was the fruit country down in there. All over those hills back in there close to the river were chestnuts. We called them chinquapins. They were little bitty chestnuts, not like these big old chinese that we have today. We would roast them; a blight hit and the trees died, so you have very few. If there's any, I don't know of them. I'd like to find one if there was one. So many have planted this chinese chestnuts which are supposed to be blight resistant. We'd go out every fall and we could roast them. They were the best little things. I don't like these big ones; there's too much nut in them, and the mold and the mildew. They are nothing compared to these we called chinquapins. Whether they were real chestnuts, I don't know. All of those hills south of the camp were full of those trees. I don't know whether that was good for timber or not. Of course, they sell the cypress. We were down looking at two beautiful walnut trees, and we'd forgotten they were down there. Someone said that all of those bottoms used to have quite a few walnuts in them.

U: Are they close together these two walnut trees?

W: They are down there by Willis Branch, the little branch we were talking about. There may be more. It takes them so long to grow. Somebody said that they are quite valuable.

U: Could you tell me, did you ever notice if there were flowers there with those two trees?

W: By the walnut trees? Flowers?

U: Yes.

W: No, these walnuts were not around her house. These were just out in the woods.

U: But you have never noticed if there were flowers there by those two walnuts?

W: No, I've never been back in there that much. It's back over on the

side that you were talking about where you thought Colbert would have been. It's right down where the arrowheads were, just across the branch.

U: If I was starting at your gate, could you give me a good description of how to get to that?

W: You follow the road to the gravel pit; go around the gravel pit to where they just in the last day or two have moved a lot of dirt out. I don't know who got it, but somebody did. You'd go across the little Willis Branch, and there are two walnut trees on the other side. I don't know how many are up in there where we were talking about where Colbert came on down.

U: Have you ever noticed any flowers or fruit trees along back in there or an old house site?

W: Oh, yes. I'll tell you there were some of these yuccas. I don't know whether they came up volunteer or whether . . . I know they came up volunteer, but whether they were brought in there or whether . . . They were all around the gravel pit; they just come up there all of the time--the low growing type, not the tall ones. These old jonquils will just come up. The best thing to mark the house are these old rambling roses. They'll just come up and stay there for generations. Your crepe myrtle also will keep coming back.

U: If you go across the Willis Branch on that road, you'll find a lot of that kind of thing?

W: There's not a road crossing Willis Branch there. You have to walk across there. We hope to get a road across there someday.

U: Will you find a lot of yuccas between there and the river?

W: I don't remember. I'll tell you the truth. You're getting out of my area. We used to hunt down there, but in the last few years, I haven't been up in that part. Charlie and I walked through there last spring; it's beautiful up in there. It's high. I don't know why they didn't take it, too. I guess it was above the elevation, is that the reason? It's just one little spot in there. I understand there's very little that they left between Columbus and up in there. We just thought we were gone. Our land goes to the mouth of Willis Branch. It was beautiful up in there, and I tell you what I saw quite a bit of was the holly. There are little bushes of that native holly all through there and some of the wild honeysuckle, too.

In fact, I have a grandfather's beard, as we call it--I don't know what the botanical name is--right here at the side of this house; it was brought from along the Tombigbee River. It is the one that has the long white beard hanging down when in bloom.

U: I don't know what they are called.

W: I don't either. We called it grandfather's beard. That's the common name for it. We had some honeysuckle growing a few years ago, which came from down on the river. It's pink; it's a low growing honeysuckle. It's mighty hard to make it grow in the prairie. I really don't know what all you would find up in there. You ramble down in there and tell me. (laughter)

We started to walk through there Sunday before last; my daughter was with us. We wore out on the job and didn't get all the way to the river. Down along our line going down on the river, it looks like down below the bluff there could have been a road. There's a barbwire fence going around by the river. I don't know who put it up unless my father did when he had cows down there. It's just an old barbwire fence; you can see it's fallen down.

U: Did you ever see any other old wells down in there besides that one?

W: No, that's the only one I've seen. Of course, the Corps has two wells they dug. They go in there and measure the water level. As far as old wells, that's the only one. Up on the Vinton place, there were two, one at the camp and one over there across the road. They have pumps in several places now, but those were all overflowing then. I'd love to have an overflowing well in my backyard. That would be nice.

There is a spring in the bluff on the Cox place; it trickles into the river. This could have been at Colbert. There were, or are, two springs at Bartons Ferry.

U: Do you remember the names of any of the families who used to work on the Cox place and lived down in there?

W: I need to get that book. I could tell you all of them—Dan Moore, Frank Sykes, Samson Moore, Emmett Lenoir. They'd call it Leenoir then; they don't now. Poke Banana lived there.

I'll tell you who Poke Banana was. I don't know whether Mrs. Andy Ellis told you that her husband raised Poke and Bull Banana from their back door when they lived down there. I'm sure she told you where they lived. Poke and Bull, they called them; that's the only names they knew. Bull moved up here with us to farm after my husband came. When he got old enough for social security, we never could prove that he was born. My husband took him all over the country; we looked in every bible that we could possibly look in. He had no school records. Mr. Andy taught them what they knew. Bull died not proving that he was born; he's one of the few. I don't know whether his brother Poke is dead; Bull died not too long ago. I don't know whether Poke had trouble or not; he didn't live with us. We never did find out where Bull was born. We knew him as Bull Banana. That's what he went by. I assume Mr. Andy Ellis gave him that name. He gave them what education they had. I don't know whether they lived out in the back; I'm sure they did somewhere.

Mrs. Ellis fed them from the kitchen. But that would not be this Mrs. Andy Ellis; that would be the first one. They were just typical southern blacks. I don't know what to call them now.

U: Use whatever word you are comfortable with.

You mentioned the camphouse that's down on the road that goes past the Trotter house, which Dr. Watson has now. Do you know who built that camphouse or when it was built?

W: They were good boys from West Point. Earl Gilmore was one of them. They went down and built a frame there just with boxes and whatever they could pick up, and camped in it. Of course, the land belonged to my father; he just let them build there. Then after he sold the other camp, a group of older people went in and rebuilt it. It never was any building to amount to anything. We had the kitchen off from the house; we enjoyed it. The first deer I ever saw was when we were down there when my oldest daughter was young. At the time, we were camping and hunting. There were no deer, and you never heard of a rattlesnake. The only thing they would watch was, "Watch the moccasins. They'll bite you." We never did think about them. They restocked the deer. The biggest thrill I think we ever got was when we were there at that camp one night and looked out and saw a little fawn getting water out of this trough that the overflowing well went into. That's the first deer I saw around here, and now they're just everywhere.

They restocked those, and I understand that they even put the other animals in. We had no ticks when we were camping in my younger days. My theory is that maybe the deer brought the ticks back into the country with them. We went through a tick dip during World War I, which I don't remember. It was a different tick, and they had to dip all of the cattle to get rid of them. This wood tick, oh, I just have a horror of them. I can attract them. (laughter) Different people can. Have you had any?

U: Yes.

W: I wish that the Corps of Engineers would get a project to get rid of them. (laughter) I imagine as things clear out, they will eventually. For years, we did not have them in the prairie, but we do now. We had them in the yard one time here, and I was scared to go out in the yard. We've gotten rid of them around the house. I think it's when you move cattle from one place to the other one the ticks are carried with them.

The first rattlesnake that I ever remember was down at the Barton's ferry. . . . There was an old Negro man called Bear that ran the ferry, and when he stopped running the ferry and they tore his house down, they found two rattlesnakes under his house. He had died in the meantime. It was headlined in the West Point paper, "Rattlesnakes Found at Barton's Ferry." Since then, they are just in spots. They're not finding them everywhere, but they seem to be in certain places more than others.

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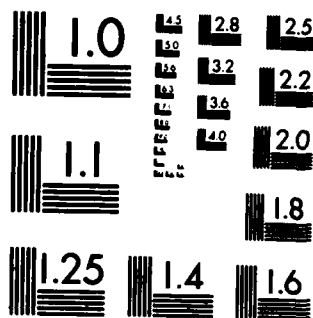
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U: You mentioned them taking down the ferryman's house at Barton's Ferry. Do you remember what that house looked like?

W: Yes, it was just a one-room with a lean-to to it, just very simple. Bear looked exactly like his name describes him.

We had more good times around the ferry. We would get in at the camp and swim all the way down to the ferry. It was quite a swim.

U: This is the camp that Dr. Watson has?

W: Well, the one north, well both of them really. My fondest memories go back to my younger days up at the north camp. From that curve in the river just north of Barton's Ferry to the ferry was the longest stretch, because the water was deep. That was quite an experience.

U: You can swim all the way down there?

W: Well, we'd go with the current part of the way. That's the reason I said from the curve to the ferry, because it was deep and you didn't have as much current. We were real lucky in our camping days that some young person didn't drown; we never did have a serious accident or a scare. I remember going to the camp where the Buttahatchie River comes into the Tombigbee. The Bethel Church, which is located on the Darracott Road, had a baptizing there. Of course, we Methodists went to a Baptist baptizing. There was a lady visiting. After the baptizing, they went swimming. She stepped off into a deep place, and came very near drowning. That's the only time in my memory that we ever had any accident along the river. I've asked my mother how did you get all of us grown and apparently didn't worry. She said, "I prayed a lot." I guess that was the answer.

The roads were just about like they are now out here--very poor. We really were lucky to have had that many people camping and no accidents.

U: Where did that ferryman's house stand?

W: Just as you went into the gate. There is a cattle gap between the road and where you went on down into the ferry, or it was.

U: There isn't now.

W: Well, you know where you turned to go back up into Mrs. Ellis's, by the gravel pits?

U: Yes.

W: Go on across towards the ferry just a little bit and it was up on a rise. I believe I saw some old washing machines and things up there the other day. Of course, they were not there when Bear's

cabin was. If I remember right somebody built a little lean-to to camp in up in there.

U: It's on the left side?

W: Yes, going down the road, it was on the rise up on the left. I can show you exactly where it was. We just all thought the world of Bear. The cars would come and blow their horns; he'd amble down and pull them across.

I wish they would reconstruct the ferry. When we talk about the ferry, these children don't know what we are talking about. We would go to Columbus that way; that was the shortest way to go to Columbus. I wish that in the plans of the recreation area, they could put in a ferry, with that old pull cable across.

U: When you get closer down to the landing itself, there's a high rise on the left.

W: He wasn't that close to the river. He was farther back.

U: Farther back?

W: Yes.

U: Do you remember a house being on that real high rise?

W: No, we'd get on there; there's a grapevine there, and we'd swing off and fall into the river.

U: It's pretty flat up right there?

W: Yes, right there. His house was back from that. It would be in line with that back to the west.

There were two, more or less, springs down on your right where it is low, where that cabin sits up on the hill. There were two springs in there, and we'd drink out of that. I remember my senior year in high school. Of course, it was still the Depression; it was hard times. I graduated in 1936. My mother and Mrs. Watkins in Aberdeen took my senior class to the ferry, and we had a picnic. I don't know what we had; I guess it was fried chicken and things. It couldn't have been Coca-Cola because things were tough as far as finances. That was quite an outing for us. You'd think we were persecuted. (laughter) They took us on a truck down there, and we had my senior class picnic, down at the Barton's Ferry.

U: Do you ever remember any buildings south of the road that goes in past the Trotter house on that eastern side of the Darracott Road?

W: No, in fact those houses, that are there now, were not there. My brother sold those lots to those families that are living there, several years before he died; but they were not there. It seems to

me there could have been a house on one of those rises, but I don't remember much about it.

U: Nothing between where they are now and the road into the river?

W: Well, let me ask you. Have you discovered any more house sites anywhere? It looks to me like to be called Vinton there would have to have been more. There was just a vague memory that something was back up in there, but I couldn't tell you what. Harrises lived down there, and Wilsons. Willie Wilson is the reason Daddy had to bring Albert Sims up here to live; he was the justice of the peace. Albert would get drunk, and he'd arrest him. (laughter) Mr. Harris fished--commercial fisherman. I remember the biggest catfish I ever saw came right out of the Tombigbee north of the Buttahatchie.

U: Is that where he fished?

W: Yes. Had trout lines up and down the river.

U: Do you know where he lived?

W: He could have lived right in there somewhere. I remember him well; he looked about like the Bear down at the ferry. He could have lived right along the river. He was just kind of a river fisherman. Mama probably could tell you more about him than I can. One time he brought a turtle up to the camp; I'd never seen such a turtle out of the river.

That was the Fourth of July. We went down there every Fourth of July, and we've been down there every Fourth of July until this year. For years and years and years, it was just a tradition; everybody in the neighborhood and all the friends would go to the camp on the Fourth. This year we didn't go. For some reason, we didn't. I hate to see that tradition broken.

U: Did other families use to do that too?

W: Well, everybody in this neighborhood and all of the friends in town just assumed it was theirs, too. Daddy loved people; he would ask everybody he could find to ask. They'd all come and just have a big Fourth of July picnic. I have pictures from way back of all our children when they were little, and when I was little.

U: Do you remember if there were any other houses or camphouses north of the Linger Longer Lodge?

W: Yes, there are. There was the Roger Pryor camp; well, it was the James White camp. Mrs. Roger Pryor, that Mr. Minnerly lives next to, was a White. She and her brother built the White camp. In recent years, John C. Jamison, Jr. built a camp north of that, but he moved his, I believe, in his settlement with the Corps. There was another camp up there, but the White's and ours were the first two along the river. I believe they called it the White instead of

the Pryor. They were both in on it. South of Linger Longer, a Prof. Guy Sipes from State College had a camp.

My father and Mama's sister and her husband built the Linger Longer. Well, we found out right soon that it's not satisfactory to have two different families who have different friends in one camp. So he bought this aunt out and she went in with a group from West Point, including Dr. Garner, a dentist. They built right where the Simmons' camp is now. In fact, Mr. Simmons was in on the original. I don't know whether that old camp is still standing. All of those camps were just two rooms with a screen porch across the front and a screen on the back, and a hall down the middle.

- U: Just south of where the Simmons' camphouse stands, toward your place, there is a dip. It just goes right behind their camphouse. Do you know what that is?
- W: Isn't that where they used to go down to the river?
- U: Have you ever heard anybody say that?
- W: Yes. Little Auntie, Mama's sister; she was Mrs. S. A. Scott. Seemed to me that they would drive down in there some way. My father had one of the first pickups around here. It had wooden wheels. He'd go and make his little trip down there every once and awhile when his wheels would get dry. He'd run it down into the river and let those wheels sit and swell. (laughter) I feel like we are just jumping from one thing to the other one.
- U: That's okay. You've heard people talk about using that to get down to the river or driving down that little place?
- W: Yes. Well, down on the Cox place, we would drive up on the rise to the mouth of Willis Branch, and then just walk down the hill and go swimming at the gravel bar. You could drive all the way down there. There may still be a road that you can get nearly down to the river. I know the other day my son-in-law and family were down in there cutting cane to stick their green beans. There's a bunch of cane down through there.
- U: Down right across the branch?
- W: Yes. They walked down there on that pretty Sunday and just cut cane. I think they were wanting to get out, but decided they'd cut some cane to stick beans with. I want you to tell me what you find down in there.
- U: Okay. (laughter) We've talked about the Watson house that your grandfather bought down there. That was called the Trotter house, and you remember your father calling it the Miller house. If your father referred to it as the Miller house, do you remember whoever told you that it was the Trotter house?

W: Yes. I remember him telling me all about General Forrest getting bit by the spider when the Trotters lived there. Where are the Trotters today? Where are their descendents?

U: We don't know. Do you know if they were at the Trotter house for very long?

W: I don't know. I don't believe from going down the deeds that they were there too long because it's such a short period of time. Whether they built the house I don't know. I assumed they did from all I've ever heard. I believe William Trotter bought land from a number of people: William F. Dowd, William A. Smith, Cader Keaton, W. H. Moore, W. H. McMath, R. G. Miller in 1878, and G. A. Beall in 1882.

U: Could you tell me a little bit about the Trotter house? Just a description of how you remember the house looking?

W: You went to the house from the road to the south of the house and to a picket fence. There was a big oak tree right at the gate. The well was to the back of the house. I have heard that part of the house had been torn down. Because of the well's location, it was either drilled after they had torn part of the house down or the house was as I remember it. The well was just to the west of the house right at the rear. It was a pump; it was not an overflow.

U: On the west side of the house?

W: West side of the house. There was a brick wall that curved around and went in to the steps on the east side. The steps, I would say, were eight feet wide. The house was not over two feet off the ground. It had a big porch with banisters around it. There were three rooms; they used two as bedrooms and one as a dining room. There was more or less a breezeway between the kitchen and the dining room; it was not open.

The dining room had a huge table; it would seat sixteen. We had it here at this house for a long time. That's what my sister in Canton wanted--that dining room table. Quite a few of the chairs and furniture were scattered around different places. The old picture frames and furniture, of course, were not Trotter furniture. This was my grandfather's furniture.

We'll go back to the house; the house was clapboard. It was a very substantial looking house. The timbers under it were just huge. The garden was to the east of the house. The buggy house was to the south. I remember the old buggy still sitting in there. I don't know what happened to the old buggies. Somebody probably just decided they wanted them.

U: Is it to the south? Is it almost on that road that goes to the river?

W: Yes, the road went right by the buggy house.

U: Was it just south of the house or just south and east?

W: It was to the southeast, not far from the house. It was still in the yard. There were fruit trees in the yard and fruit trees in the slope to the back, to the north of the house. Of course, it had been kept painted; it was not in too bad shape as far as paint is concerned. I'm sure it had been roofed. It had a cypress shingle roof, but it had green shingles on it. Shingles had been put over the cypress shingles, just like this house has the cypress shingles, but it has the shingles put over them. Most of the old houses had those old cypress shingles. They thought they were fixing it for a lifetime. But it would rain under them and over them and between them. Don't let it snow; it would snow all through them. We had to put shingles over the cypress. You can still see them in the attic here. They thought they were doing the best. I guess at the time, it was the best.

U: Yeah. Did they have chimneys?

W: Oh, yes. They had a chimney in the front two rooms. There was a fireplace between both rooms. You've seen these old houses where the chimney would serve two rooms, one on each side.

U: So, it is open on both sides?

W: Yes. They had closed them in. I believe in the time that I remember down there, they were using an old wood stove to cook. Now, there was a flue in that dining room. At your age, do you know what a flue is?

U: Yes.

W: My grandchildren have all wanted to know what a flue is. (laughter) The kitchen just had the flue coming out of the ceiling, but the other two were between those two rooms. That's what's in my memory. I don't think Mama remembers anything but that. I assume the house was built around 1852. I don't know why they would tear part of it down. A tornado went through that section. I think Mama told you the tale about the cemetery, about how it opened the tombs, and how this man was uncovered. He was in an iron casket shaped like his body. He wore a Masonic pin; the Masons reburied him. It is possible that the tornado touched one of the sides of the Trotter house.

U: You were telling me that the furniture inside belonged to your grandfather. Could you describe the furniture that was in there?

W: I would say that the period would be Victorian.

U: Most of that dated, you said, between 1860 and 1890?

W: On the back of that bed in my bedroom, it has that it was stored in 1886 in Columbus. It is written in black pencil on this tall, very

massive, very ornate, walnut bed. We can't dust them. It's impossible. The bed that you're looking at now is not as bad as the other one in the front bedroom. You'd break your fingernails off. How they kept the house clean, I do not know.

U: This used to be in the home in Vinton?

W: Yes. Those old wardrobes, chifforobes, are put together with pegs. That one up there in the room just has wooden pegs holding it together. All of it is solid; most of it is walnut. Nearly all of the Victorian furniture, the love seat and all, is mahogany. The old piano is rosewood they tell me.

U: But that furniture was never in that house?

W: Oh no, the parlor suit is reproduction. The others took the furniture. But the table there and some of the chairs were, at one time, in the Trotter house. My daughters have chairs. Before my uncle died, someone went in and stole the oval picture frames and the chairs and so many of the pretty little things. My grandfather and grandmother didn't have a child for eight years. She said she always prayed for a black-haired, black-eyed son. They had a youth bed, a single bed, and a cradle to match this bed. Mrs. Cary Upton has the cradle at her house now. The youth bed is up in the attic. I brought the twin bed home and was going to clean it up for one of my girls; I put it out in the outhouse, and the cotton caught on fire and it burned up. There were four beds. They really brought him up with all the different beds. I imagine that the youth bed was quite unusual at that time. I brought it down two or three times and used it when my children were small. I had considered making a single bed out of it, but I hate to ruin it. I don't say much about it because someone will want it. (laughter)

U: This furniture was used in that house? It came out of the house after your uncle died?

W: No, Mama and Daddy got most of it when they married. After Grandfather moved from Columbus, he had quite a bit of extra furniture. So, when Mama and Daddy married he gave them those two bedroom suits, the wardrobes, and anything they wanted I imagine. After Grandmother died, they got all the little sewing boxes and things and brought them up to Strong. This uncle had certain things that he didn't want us to touch. My daughter has an old clock that came from down there; it's a Seth Thomas. My brother's wife there in West Point has clocks, and she also has the music box, which is very unusual; it's just a beautiful thing. So many of the things are just scattered around with so many dividing them. I assume that Mrs. Upton has a bed that came out of the house. She has refinished it since she married. She would be a great-granddaughter. She is the one fixing the house behind the cemetery on the Vinton place. This was the last furniture taken from the house.

U: Do you know what kind of tableware or dishes came out of that house?

W: The china, that you see on the wall, was painted by my grandmother, Fanny Lou Clay Watson. This was from a set that she painted. She painted this picture of the deer. I understand that her art teacher painted the one in the living room above the piano. Who the art teacher was I do not know. She painted the one in the hall. The different children have gotten different portraits and paintings that she painted.

The handwork, needlework, and linens are just beautiful. Of course, it's been worn. Evidently from the books and all, they liked the arts and the crafts.

U: Did those plates and things come out of the Trotter house?

W: Yes. They're so thin; you can see through the cup.

U: Let's go look at them. Oh, it's very thin.

W: I have enough of them, but some of them have got little chips.

U: It is Haviland.

W: They buy the china plain.

U: Limoges Haviland.

W: She would paint it. I think it is such an unusual set; I wish I could copy some.

U: Is there a whole set of this?

W: No, this is a piece of a set. I'm sure there was an entire set. It's been broken through the years. I have enough to serve four, if they don't mind a chip. We were so careless with them for years.

U: Are there plates or bowls with this set, too?

W: Yes, there are several of the plates and several salad plates. It seems to me there was a large platter. This must have been a cake plate. I broke that loop off myself putting it up on a holder. It fell off of a plate holder one day.

U: Can we look at that one?

W: Yeah. This silver is very ornate. I gave Dr. Watson the last big tablespoon not long ago; it had HDW on it.

U: The maker's mark on the china is CH Field Haviland Limoges. There is a mark above it--CFH.

W: I would assume that anyone could take that, and give you an exact date on it.

U: Yes, they can. It's all hand-painted.

W: Yes, it's not decals either. You can hold the plates up to the light and tell whether they used decals.

I love this picture. I'll tell you what's happened to these pictures. They hung for so long over old heaters and fireplaces, and they didn't know the first principle of taking care of oil paintings, like putting linseed oil on the back. That's the reason they have cracked. I have checked on having people to restore this one, but they said the colors of the paint would be so hard to match. Somebody said, "Well, just let it be that way." I'm scared to dust it. The one in the living room and the one out there in the hall are in better condition. This one hung for years over this mantle in here, before we lowered the ceiling. We've lowered the ceilings in this house; they thought I had lost my mind, but it is the best thing we ever did. I have thoroughly enjoyed them being lowered.

U: You mentioned there was silver with initials on it that came out of that house?

W: Yes. It was very weak, and the forks and other pieces would break. I have some pearl-handled knives. There was an article in the West Point paper recently about pearl-handled knives. The nephew in Florida is a jewelry maker; he has taken so many of the broken pieces and made different ones rings out of them. I gave Dr. Watson the last tablespoon not long ago, because I felt he was the HDW. He has it hanging in his house on his buffet. Through the years, they've just gotten scattered and lost. This was one of the old fruit stacks. I believe you saw some of that up in the attic. They had the old cruets. There's quite a few of these pieces. Different ones have gotten different things.

U: These came out of the house?

W: Yes.

U: This fruit stack says Hard White Metal 1769 1/2. The maker's mark is a set of scales; it's Middletown Plate Company, Quadruple Plate.

W: I'm sure it was cleaned with everything that it wasn't supposed to be cleaned with. Some are in better condition than this one, and some I put upstairs. I can't keep them looking like they should. There is a cruet that polishes fine, but all of the bottles are broken. We had different types of help through the years. The cup in there, the one I was showing you that's made out of silver dollars, is one of the oldest things. That was from my grandmother's father. It was Great-grandfather Clay's.

The sewing box came out of the house; that was my grandmother's sewing box. It was inlaid. It had the little tray and all of the accessories were ivory. The little tray has broken and most of the accessories. Here's one; I guess it's ivory, or mother-of-pearl.

U: It looks like mother-of-pearl.

W: There is an old thimble of gold. Oh, here's some more. That's what they wrapped the embroidery thread on.

U: It's got a brass stem on it with circular mother-of-pearl ends.

W: There is an old tape measure somewhere.

U: That looks like a hair ornament. It's got a little stone inset.

W: Maybe, it's for tatting. I don't know what it was. All of her crochet needles and things are scattered around in some of these drawers in here. This is my catchall now. This had a tray that these fit in. It's up in one of those trunks that we rambled in the other day.

U: Did your grandmother live in that house?

W: Yes.

U: Did she die before her husband did?

W: Yes, she died in a Meridian, Mississippi hospital. He died in the old Trotter house at Vinton. He died in 1913; I believe she died in 1911. I wasn't born until 1918, so I'm having to go by what I've heard. Evidently she liked pretty things, as you can gather from her having things like this. I just love this box.

U: It's beautiful.

W: I showed you one of the baby's dresses that the children have nearly all been christened in. This is one of my father's. I showed you this the last time; I think this was an everyday one. It's not nearly as elaborate as others. My grandmother did all of this work.

U: This came out of the house as well?

W: This was my father's baby clothes. He was born 1887. She made all of this lace.

U: It's all hand-sewn.

W: I'm not sure about this lace.

U: It has small mother-of-pearl buttons on it.

W: My nephew in Meridian has the one that the babies have been christened in. They had all of their children baptized in it. We called it christened; now they call it baptized. They are Episcopalians. I don't know what they call it.

U: It's beautiful.

W: We had his little velvet suit. In fact, his picture was in that frame with the little velvet suit on. I took it out and put Mama in there. It may be behind her picture. You can't keep everything. You just can't possibly. I've got too much now. (laughter) I need to throw half of it away.

U: Do you know if there were any other outbuildings there besides the stable that the buggy was in?

W: Not to my knowledge. There must have been a toilet somewhere around, but I don't remember it.

U: Do you remember the buggies?

W: Yes. Mrs. Lucy Natchez,³ who took care of my Uncle Julian, would put him in it and bring him up here to church. She would tie the buggy and the horses right out here. Somebody would have to carry him in for her. Well, she would carry him. She would bring him out once a week and come to visit, until she got sick. Yeah, I remember the buggies; there were two. One was more of a surrey and the other was just one of these one-seated buggies. That's the one she used; she used the one with the top on it.

I don't remember much about buggies. I remember the first automobiles more than I do the last buggies. I've lived at a grand time though. I have a memory of the past, but I still like the conveniences of right now. (laughter) I don't remember the first automobile that we had. I remember when we got electricity. I don't remember not having electricity, but I remember the night that we went to a chautauqua. Do you know what a chautauqua is?

U: Yes.

W: Daddy didn't go. When we came home, he had the house lit up. I don't remember using lamps. That made such an impression on me that I remember it.

We were so happy to get electricity in the rural area out here. We were some of the first rural people that had electricity because we were between the two towns of Aberdeen and West Point. When they got electricity, they just tore down all the pretty old chandeliers and fixtures and put up that one light bulb hanging down the middle in each room. It was such a mistake. I know this little church had a beautiful old chandelier with the lamps all in it. I'm sure it was in the original church. They were so happy to get those lights in the church that they gave it to the Negro church. I asked where they were. I never did find this old church fixture. It would have been pretty rewired.

We had a lamp here in the dining room that pulled up and down. I remember one night we had the preachers over. We always had to

³Also spelled Natcher.

feed the preachers. My sister had a split between her teeth. She got tickled, and something spit out, hit the lamp chimney and popped it. (laughter) That is about all I remember about not having electricity. I remember it made such an impression when I drove up that night and saw the house lit up.

They did away with all of the pretty fixtures. How much we'd give for them now; I think that was general more or less everywhere. Later on they started replacing them, but they just couldn't imagine rewiring them. I don't guess they knew what to do with those with the old lamps in them; they just took them down and threw them away. They were good brass. They were metal you wouldn't get now.

U: Did Julian live in the Trotter house until he died?

W: Yes, he died there. Now wait. I don't know whether he died there or in the hospital in West Point. I believe they had taken him to the hospital. He finally developed kidney trouble. His father said, "I want him to be happy." They thought of sending him to school. He was just as bright as he could be, but he never went to school. He was the happiest person. I just don't know whether his father was right or wrong. It's just a way to look at it. He was just as content. Every Christmas he wanted one of those big old watches and a knife. That's what he wanted, and he expected it. He'd pull that watch out and look at it. He seemed like he was simple because his face was so drawn, but he wasn't. I think that with the schools we have today he would have just been fine. He was happy; he didn't have a worry in the world.

U: Did anyone live in that house after that?

W: Yes, I think so. We told you that Mrs. Lucy Natchez stayed with Uncle Julian. But she died. After she died, there was a debate as to whether to bring him up here to live. My father had already died. So finally Mama decided to get this Negro woman, Maudie Chandler. Her family was down in there a long time. She moved in the house with him and just kept him until he died. The agreement with her was that if she would go take care of him, she could stay in the house as long as she lived; she did. She was the last one to live in the Trotter house. She had a large family of children; they didn't stay with her. She had one little grandson that stayed with her. She was an older Negro woman. Apparently she was mighty good to him because we checked on him all of the time. He died in 1941 just before my oldest daughter was born. We couldn't have done without Maudie. It would have been a mighty big hardship to have him here. Mama was trying to farm, and he would have been such a care. We watched after him, but he wanted to have his certain things he liked. He would not let any of the family remove those things from the house. Maudie was quite old when she died.

U: So, the house was left empty then for awhile?

W: I don't know why they tore it down, unless it had started decaying

and falling down. I remember they had picture frames made out of the lumber from it. Mama has one made out of its lumber. I have a small one. The old timbers were just grand. I believe my brother took some of the timbers over to his house and used it for different things. I'm kind of blank about why he tore it down. I know it stood empty there awhile. They considered redoing it at one time. (laughter)

U: You said you spent a lot of time down on the river when you were a kid camping. Did you ever remember a 4-H camp down there?

W: I remember the old scout camps. Really, I don't know why I never belonged to the 4-H Club. In my youth, I don't believe they were as active as they were even a little later. If this neighborhood ever had a 4-H Club, I don't remember it. We never did have a women's club. I worked with 4-H Clubs while employed by the Missouri Extension Service.

The first Monroe County Home Demonstration Agent is still alive and just as active as she could be. She would be a wonderful woman for you to talk to, Mrs. Maude Cobb in Aberdeen. She's very alert. She's on every fund-raising drive. They had her on television the other night picking up aluminum beer cans to recycle.

But I don't remember us ever even having a 4-H Club. Later on, Dr. Watson and George Watson were big 4-H Club members. Maybe they were just not as active then. I belonged to the Girl Scouts.

U: Did you ever hear of a Stinson Cemetery, S-T-I-N-S-O-N?

W: In that area close to there?

U: We found a cemetery record with burials for a Stinson Cemetery, and it has Asa Watson buried in it. We were wondering where it is.

W: It's across Highway 45 Alternate, and Dr. Mark Gordan Hazard owns the place now. He's a veterinarian in West Point.

U: Hazard?

W: Hazard, H-A-Z-A-R-D. He's retired; he's still with PLI, the Bryan Livestock barn. Of course, he's not old enough to retire, but he had detached retinas. He lives on South Division Street. He owns the place; the cemetery is right out in the middle of the pasture. I'd like to go over there soon. Go past the Mennonite School just west of Highway 45 Alternate about four miles north of West Point.

U: Yes.

W: I'd have to get somebody to show me how to get in there. I understand that you can't get to this road off of the highway. They have built fences. I'd like to go over; it's been years since I've been over there. That's where the original family cemetery is.

Asa Watson was buried there and the older ones. Isn't it a shame to start one cemetery, and then come over here and start another new one? Should keep families together.

U: I guess it's because people move.

W: Yes. I guess at that time that was a great distance. It would have been so much better, if they could have all stayed over there or over here. This one was started later I'm sure.

U: Have you ever heard of a Sykes Chapel?

W: Sykes Chapel. I do not know about Sykes Chapel, but Sykes Cemetery is located southwest of the Strong community on land formerly owned by Mr. Eugene Sykes. A map shows a Paynes Chapel Cemetery just to the south. I got my information from a map prepared by an oil company in 1974. Where did you get the information on it?

U: It's mentioned in a newspaper column. There's no reference to location.

W: It sounds like a Methodist church, doesn't it?

U: It's someplace in the Waverly or Vinton or Darracott area.

W: Over here behind the house, there was a black Methodist church; what it was called I do not know. That doesn't sound Baptist. They just recently did away with this little church and built a little brick church on the old Aberdeen Road. You pass it coming to Strong from West Point. The Eugene Sykes plantation is just to the north of us here. However, the Sykes Cemetery is located on a smaller place southwest of Strong. The son's wife, Virginnia Sykes, is still alive and lives in Aberdeen. I don't know whether she could tell you anything or not. The Sykes are an old family. Miss Lucille Peacock can fill you in on that I bet, because she is connected with the Sykes. She's some relative of theirs.

U: Your mother had mentioned that at one time your grandfather had lived in West Point at the Kyle Chandler house.

W: He would move in in the winter for my father to go to school. The private school was Goat Hill Academy. The Preston Winter home was across the street from the Chandler home. That's on your way out here up the old Aberdeen Road. The Winter home was a part of the old Goat Hill Academy. I taught at Oak Hill Academy across the street. It is a private school. I would tell the kids about my father going to the Goat Hill Academy. (laughter) They said the reason they called it that was because goats slept under the house. That's just what I heard. Then he would move back out on the farm in the summertime.

U: He's moving from Vinton into West Point?

W: So he could go to school. Whoever remodeled that house left an opening going up the stairs. You could see the big old logs. Of course, those have been covered. The house looks very much like it did in my earliest memory. It was always a well-kept house.

U: Did they rent that house from someone?

W: No, they owned it.

U: Do you know about when that would be?

W: Well, if he was born in 1887, to go to elementary school he would be six. He married in 1909. He went to State and Ole Miss and Millsaps. It must have been about 1893, wouldn't you think?

U: Is it when he goes to elementary school over there?

W: Yes. They didn't go through twelve years of school like we do today. They would send them when they thought they were ready. He went off to another school after that. He went to Belt Buckle up in Tennessee. He went to thirteen different schools and never did finish at any of them. (laughter) I think he played football at Ole Miss, and at State and Millsaps. Now they won't let them do that.

I have a theme that he wrote. He loved a good time. It was real cute, and it had the same grading marks on the side that I had when I was in college. It was about this football team. One of the Presidents was there to watch it. We used to laugh at him when he said he never did finish at any.

U: You mentioned that he had a store here in Strongs. What was that like?

W: It was just a regular, typical, country store. It was just a long wooden frame building with what I guess you would call a shotgun porch across the front which loafers sat on. They would chew the rag and play checkers. He had everything in it from garden seed to dress material. In the back, they had the gristmill, where they would bring the corn. They would grind it, and they would make their money off of getting the toll. The men had a bad habit of staying there at night; they would play poker. That was recreation for the men of the neighborhood. They could tell the tales about coon hunting and fox hunting. It was where they would ration their hands or the labor. They'd give them rations; they didn't pay them money. All of the farmers around would give them flour. There were two stores. There was a meat market at the time. His health got bad, and he had so much on him that my uncle from Noxubee County moved up and took the store. It was sold out to him. He kept the store and the post office for years.

U: What was his name?

W: He was Emmett Smith; that was my mother's brother. He had the post

office in the store, and then later it was moved over to the Dukeminier Store. It stayed until the postmaster died about eight years ago. No one wanted this little country post office. Therefore, we gave up our name of Strongs. It was an all-day job with very little pay. We had been lucky to keep it as long as we did. We hated to lose our name. Now we are rural Aberdeen--R.F.D. 4.

U: Do you know what years he ran that store?

W: I believe from about 1915 until about 1922. He wanted to go to World War I, and he did everything in the world to get to go. They told him he had a family and a farm and to stay at home. They didn't attract them as freely as they did in World War II. He always had the men that helped him in the store; he had several. There was a Mr. Word in Aberdeen that lived in the house and worked in the store. He was from down in the Delta. They had young boys who would come. Really he had more than he could do. That's the reason he got out of it. He also ran a cotton gin for awhile.

U: What's the gentlemen's name in Aberdeen?

W: Word. He was the head of the Gulf filling station up there. He's retired. He moved in from the Delta into Aberdeen. He told me one day that he used to work out here. There wasn't any place for them to live. So, they would have to keep the boys that helped in the store. There was the depot, a big building down here. We have just gone down to nothing. (laughter) I guess most country communities have.

U: Do you know if your grandfather ever ran the store in Vinton?

W: I have an idea he was part owner in it because of this book that I want you to find out more about. Since the name is in there, he must have had an interest in it. This Mr. Howard must have run the store, because the names Howard and Watson appear that way.

U: Do you know where your father got the goods that he sold in his store?

W: I wish I had a box back. I made a chess set for the little grandson in Pascagoula, and I didn't have a box to put it in. There was a wooden box that had garden seeds in it, and the top of the box gives a list of the flower seeds and the company. I put his chess set in that and took it to him; I thought it would be a keepsake, too.

William R. Moore in Memphis, I believe, was the main place. I remember them for the dry goods. So many times though, the novelty salesmen would come around with the buttons and the smaller things. They called them drummers. As far as the groceries, I don't know who was the wholesaler at that time. They'd have to bring that out on the train. In most country stores, they'd bring them in wagons, but this would come out on the train. I remember them unloading

it--flour, staple goods. I think the salesmen brought around lace, material and whatnot. The women just looked forward to them coming so they'd have a new supply. Having the train which ran four times a day, four days a week to West Point and Aberdeen, the women had a little more opportunity of getting a bigger variety of things than in some country communities. This other store that I remember more about was the Dukeminier store. It had everything in it. In fact, it's just closed a few years ago, when A. S. Dukeminier, Jr. died.

U: Was it running at the same time that your father's was?

W: Yes, it was not where its present location is; it was across the railroad track. In fact, I expect it was started before he had his. At that time they were both thriving businesses, plus there was a meat market which was run by Mr. Joe Rippetoe. I guess he killed the meat and just sold it fresh. People didn't eat beef and fresh meat like they do now. They'd live on the pork in the winter when there was a hog killing. Why it didn't kill them I don't know.

U: Your father lived in Vinton as a child. Summers I believe. . . .

W: He was born in Columbus and then raised here at Vinton. Then they lived at Vinton. They would come into West Point in the winter for him to go to school. After he went off to prep school, I assume that they stopped; they sold the house.

U: Did he ever tell you any stories about things he used to do when he was a child and lived at Vinton?

W: Oh, goodness, goodness, goodness, they were into something all the time. Up at Belt Buckle, he was expelled for crawling up on top of this two-story dormitory, which was more or less like a house. He and some boy threw a bushel of walnuts down the chimney; it knocked soot in all of the rooms. He was sent home for that. Oh, they were constantly doing something.

U: So he went to boarding school then?

W: Yes, after he left Goat Hill Academy. He was always full of life. He loved people, and he loved life. His death just seemed like he was an unfinished book. He always had a crowd around. It was the same way at college; I'm sure that's the way it was when his friends got together, they would talk for hours.

U: Did he ever tell you who his playmates were when he lived as a child in Vinton?

W: From what I can gather, he would come up to Strongs. He had these relatives here. I know one time they were telling about this cousin whose father told him he could have some corn to grow. So he grew a corn patch. The boys teased him and told him that when the tassels come you are supposed to cut them all off. He went right down each row of corn and cut all the tassels. They would do

things like that all of the time. I heard him speak of a Mr. Skip Shinn who lived near Vinton. I heard him mention names such as: W. M. Coltrane, W. C. White, Keaton, William Moore, W. H. McMath, Harrison, Duke, Dukeminier, Bradley, and Warren. I think Warren was black. I remember a Peter Warren. He had lots of friends in West Point, Mr. Jim Carothers and different ones. Mostly I've heard him talk about those that he had been to college with.

As far as the friends down there in what we call Vinton, I don't remember him talking too much about them. He stayed up here awhile, a year, and went to school. He stayed with an uncle, Wheeler Watson. A first cousin, Wheeler, got killed in one of the first automobile accidents. He never married; he was my father's age. They were just devoted to each other. They called him Duck. He was on the present Highway 8. He had one of the first cars. He had a girl from Nashville with him, and they drove off of a bridge and both were killed. I guess that was one of the first automobile accidents in this country.

U: Do you know about when that would have been?

W: It's when Uncle Wheeler died. I can look it up; Mama'd know I'm sure. I think it was about 1913. It was on a Sunday afternoon. Miss Fite was visiting in Aberdeen, and he was just taking her for a ride. I think she was quite attractive.

U: I can't think of any other questions I have right now at this time. Can you think of any?

W: Well, I'll think of more things when you leave that I should have told.

U: Well, we can come back again. (laughter) I'd like to thank you very much for the interview for both the Project and myself. I've enjoyed it very much.

W: Well, I hope it will be some useful information.

U: I'm sure it is. Thank you very much.



Figure 11. Henry Duke Watson I.



Figure 12. Henry Duke Watson II.
Photos courtesy of Ethel
Wallace and Ethel Watson.



Figure 13. Caledonia Oliver Clay and her daughter Fannie Clay Watson.



Figure 14. Lucy Natcher and Julian Watson ca. 1905. Photos courtesy of Ethel Wallace and Ethel Watson.

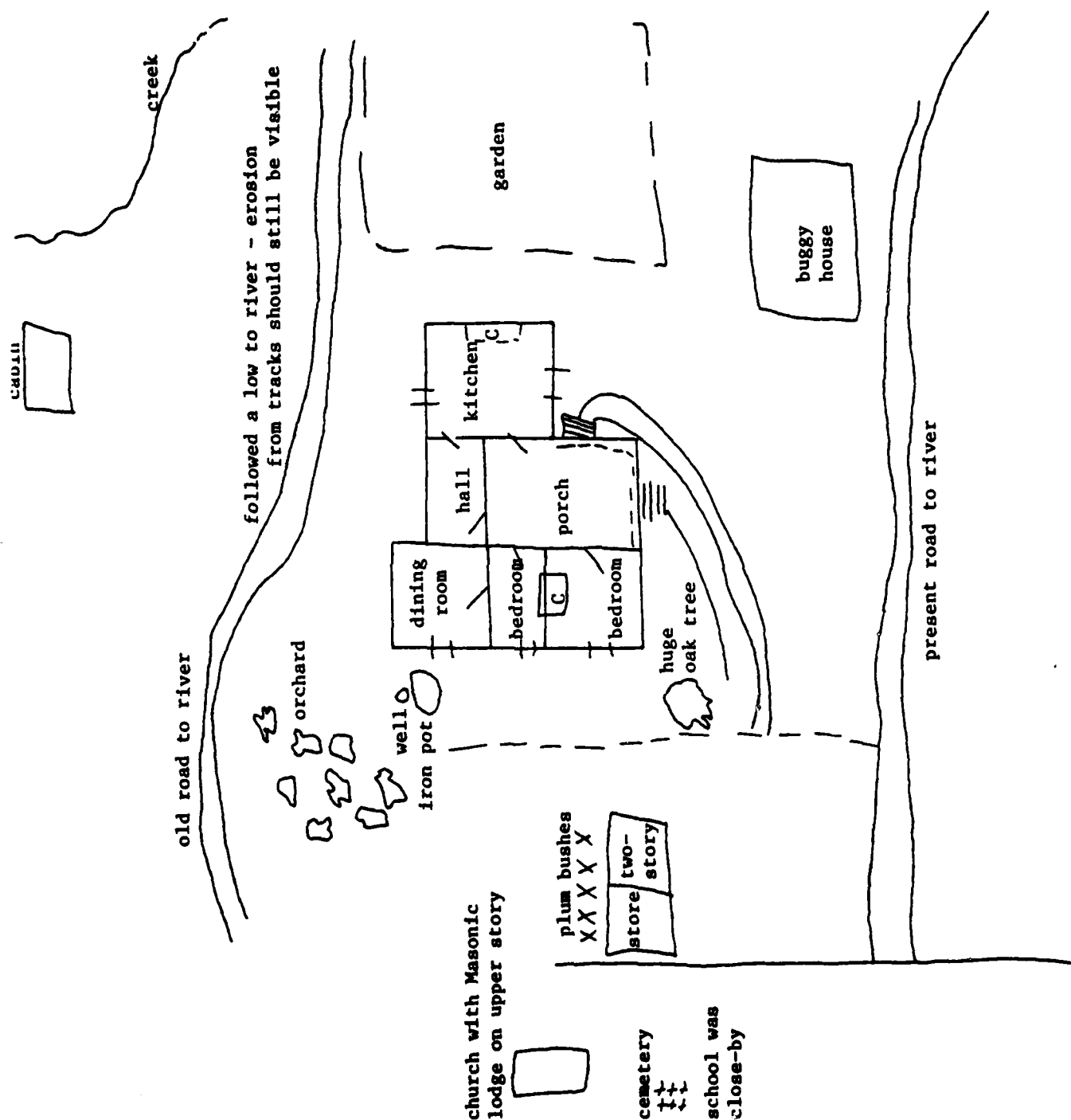


Figure 15. Floor plan of the Trotter house and Vinton general store.
Drawing by Ethel Watson Wallace.

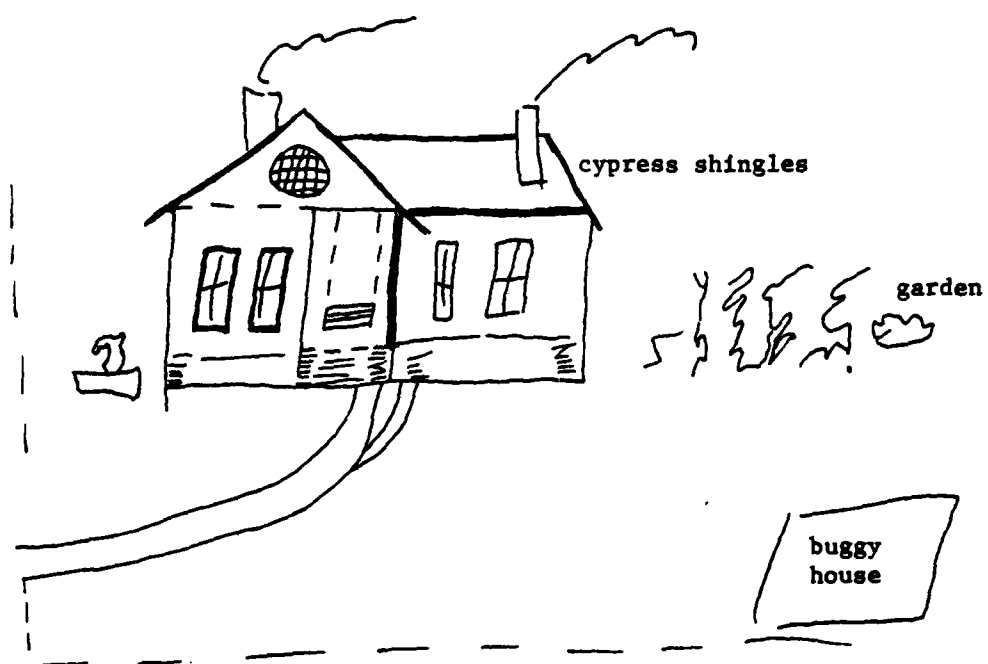


Figure 16. Front view of the Trotter house. Drawing by Ethel Watson Wallace.

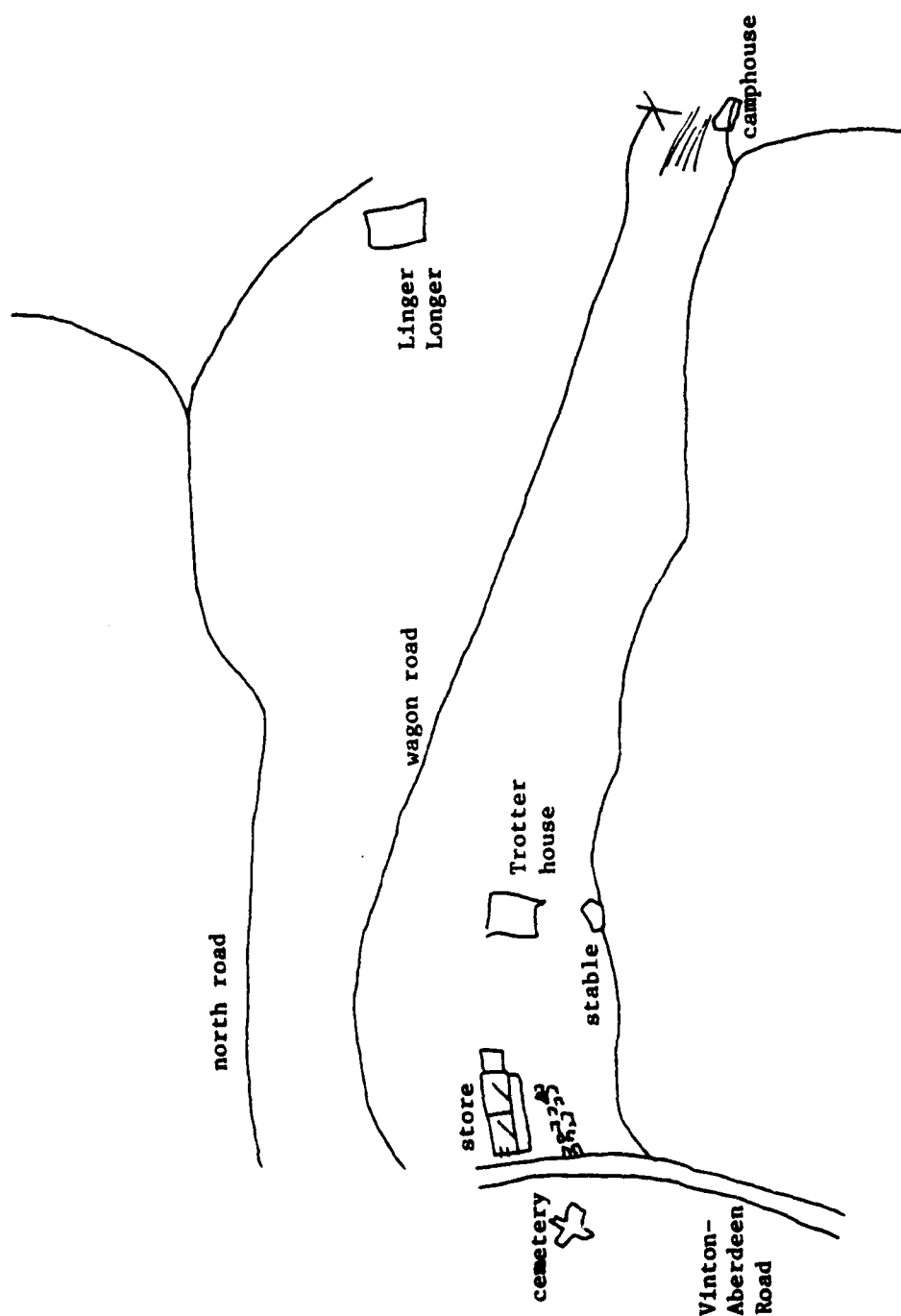


Figure 17. Sketch map of Vinton. Drawing by Ethel Watson Wallace.